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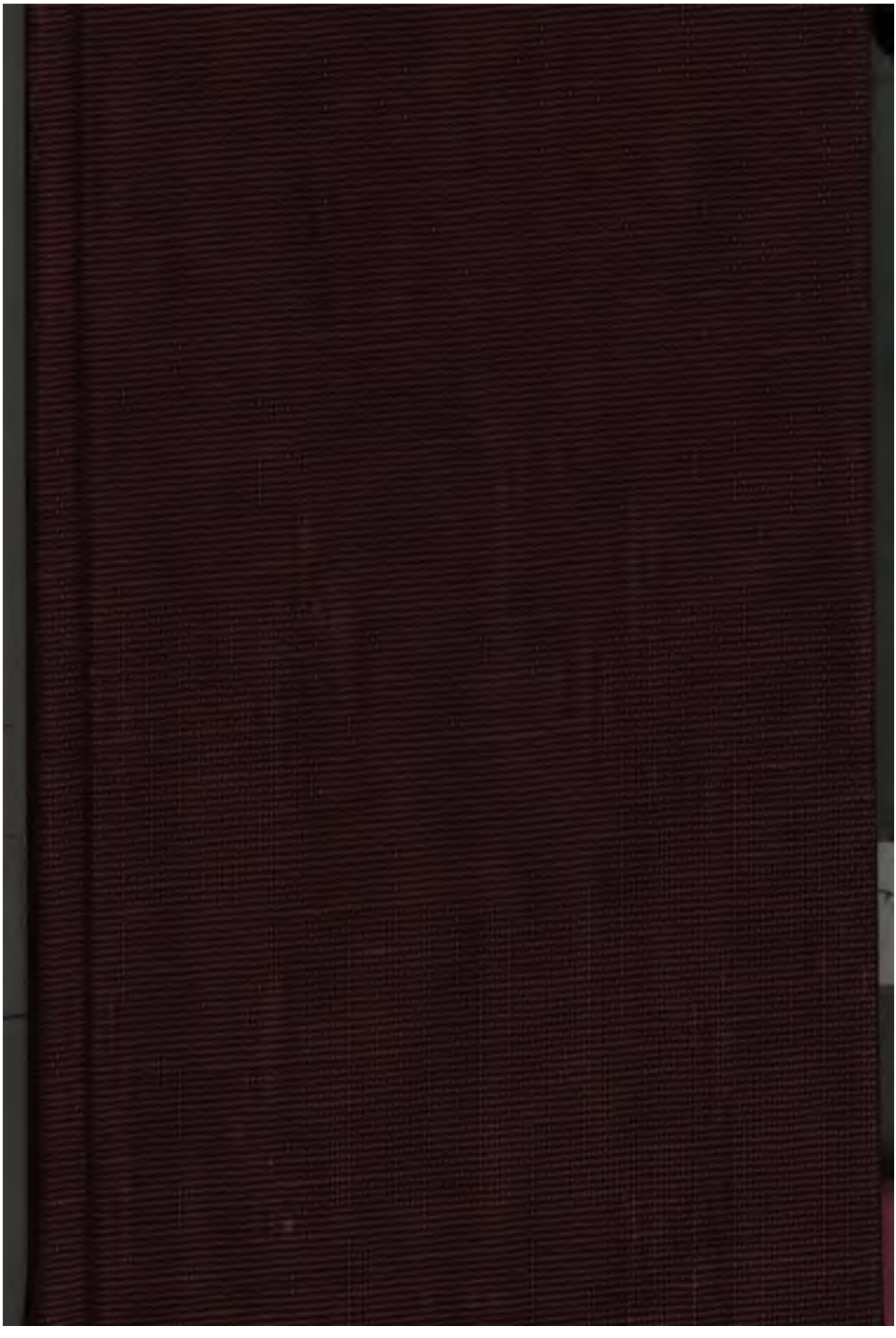

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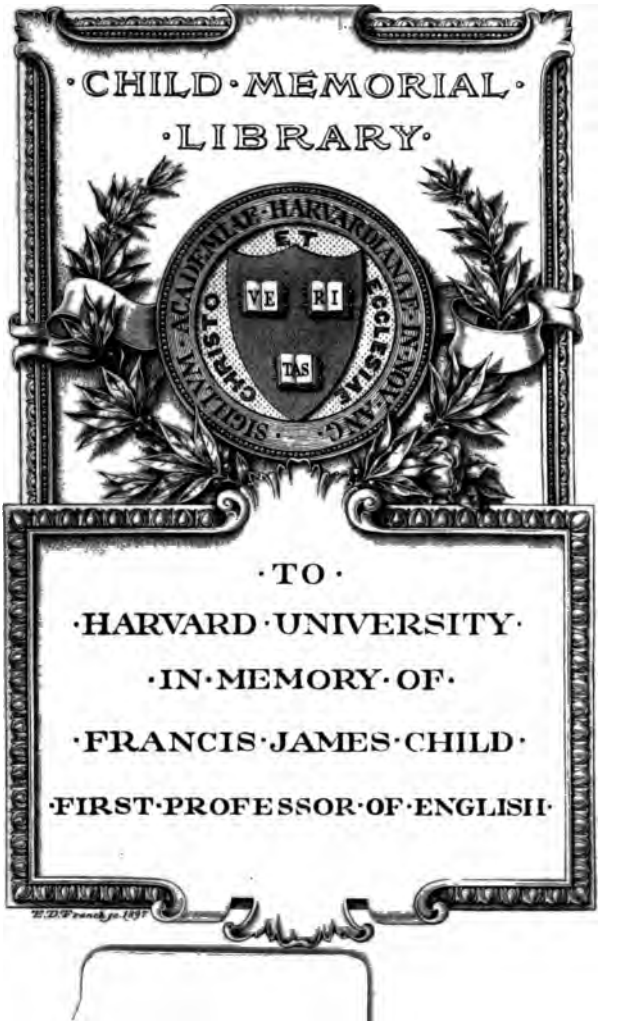

# CHAUCER'S

# ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

## AND OTHER POEMS

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

# CHAUCER'S ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

## TROILUS AND CRESEIDE

## AND THE MINOR

## POEMS

WITH LIFE OF
THE POET BY SIR HARRIS
NICOLAS

VOL I

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## VOL. I.

MEMOIR of Chaucer, by Sir Harris Nicolas.
The Romaunt of the Rose.

# Life of Chaucer.

## BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS.

" ———— That renownmed Poet
Dan Chaucer, Well of English undefyled,
On Fame's eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled:"
Spenser.

ALTHOUGH great trouble was taken to illustrate the life of Chaucer by his former biographers,[1] the field of research was but imperfectly gleaned. Many material facts in his history have been very recently brought to light, and are now, for the first

[1] Godwin, in his Life of Geoffrey Chaucer, (2 vols. 4to. 1803; second edition, 4 vols. 8vo. 1804), speaking of searches among the Public Records, says, " In this sort of labour I had been indefatigable," but "after all my diligence, I am by no means confident that I may not have left some particulars to be gleaned by the compilers who shall come after me." 8vo. vol. i. p. xiii. Copies of most of the Records he had seen are printed at length in the Appendix to that work, and are marked in the Notes to this Memoir by the letter G, the omission of which letter shows distinctly what has been since discovered.

time, published; but it is not from these discoveries only that this account of the Poet will derive its claim to attention. An erroneous construction has been given to much of what was before known of him; and absurd inferences have, in some cases, been drawn from supposed allusions to himself in his writings. A Life of the Poet, founded on documentary evidence instead of imagination, was much wanted; and this, it is hoped, the present Memoir will supply.

CHAUCER's parentage is unknown, and the conjectures that have been hazarded on the subject are too vague to justify the adoption of any of them.[2] His name, which was of some antiquity, was borne by persons in a respectable station in society; and it is likely that some of them were connected with the city of London.[2] That he was of a gentleman's, though not of a noble or distinguished family, can scarcely be doubted; but the frequent occurrence of passages in his writings, wherein he insists that conduct is the only proof of gentility, that he alone is truly noble who acts nobly, with others of a similar import, may possibly be ascribed to his desire to level the artificial distinctions of birth, from the consciousness of being, in that respect, inferior to those of whom his talents

[2] For all the information that has been collected respecting persons of the name of CHAUCER, see Note A. at the end of this Memoir.

had rendered him the associate. Upon a supposed reference to himself in one of his works, he is considered to have been born in London;[3] but, as will afterwards appear, no reliance can be placed on that passage.

The time of his birth has been much discussed,[4] in consequence of a deposition made by him at Westminster, in October 1386, in the remarkable controversy between Richard Lord Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, that he was of the age of "forty and upwards," and "had been armed twenty-seven years." If by this statement it were meant that he was then only a little more than forty years old, he would have been born about 1345, whereas the birth of the Poet had been always hitherto assigned to the year 1328. There are strong reasons, derived from many passages in his own works, and in the writings of Gower and Occleve, (some of which will be afterwards cited), for believing that he was born long before 1345; and the mistakes in the ages of the deponents on that occasion, some of whom are stated to have

[3] "Also the citye of London that is to me so dere and swete, in which I was forth growen; and more kindely love have I to that place, than to any other in yerth, as every kindly creture hath full appetite to that place of his kindely engendure, and to wilne reste and pece in that stede to abide." "Testament of Love," book i. sect. 5. See the remarks in a subsequent page on this and other imaginary references to himself in that work.

[4] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, 8vo. vol. i. p. xxi. et seq.

been ten, and others even twenty years younger than they really were, prevents Chaucer's deposition from being conclusive on the point. Indeed, it would appear that the precise age of the deponents was not deemed of much consequence, and was inserted only as a matter of form; but that the time they had served in the field being essential, because their personal knowledge of the fact in dispute greatly depended thereon, it was probably accurately represented. Chaucer, therefore, may have been ten, or even fifteen years above forty in 1386, which would make the period of his birth nearly agree with the date usually assigned to it. He had, he said, borne arms for twenty-seven years; so that assuming him to have been about fifty-five when examined at Westminster, he did not commence his military career until 1359, at which time he would have been above twenty-eight years of age.

Some of Chaucer's biographers suppose that he was educated at Oxford, and some again, at Cambridge;[5] while others solve the doubt, more ingeniously than probably, by concluding that he was at both Universities;

[5] Upon the doubtful authority of a line in the "Court of Love," (l. 913,) in which he is supposed to speak of himself as "Philogenet of Cambridge, Clerk," it has been concluded that he was educated at that University; "but," as is well observed in the Edinburgh Review (vol. ii. p. 433), "we cannot see how the acknowledged

but there is no proof, however likely it may be, that he belonged to either.

It has been said that Chaucer was originally intended for the law, and that from some cause which has not reached us, and on which it would be idle to speculate, the design was abandoned. The acquaintance he possessed with the classics, with divinity, with astronomy, with so much as was then known of chemistry, and indeed with every other branch of the scholastic learning of the age, proves that his education had been particularly attended to; and his attainments render it impossible to believe that he quitted college at the early period at which persons destined for a military life usually began their career. It was not then the custom for men to pursue learning for its own sake; and the most rational manner of accounting for the extent of Chaucer's acquirements is to suppose that he was educated for a learned profession. The knowledge he displays of divinity would make it more likely that he was intended for the Church than for the Bar, were it not that the writings of the Fathers were generally read by all classes of students. One writer says

falsehood of one part of this designation can possibly prove the truth of the rest; or why Chaucer may not have invented a fictitious character to be attached to a false name." Leland says he was of Oxford; but his account of Chaucer is too full of mistakes to be entitled to any credit.

that Chaucer was a member of the Inner Temple, and that while there he was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street,[6] and another observes, that after he had travelled in France, "collegia leguleiorum frequentavit.[7]" Nothing, however, is positively known of Chaucer until the autumn of 1359, when he himself says he was in the army with which Edward the Third invaded France, and that he served for the first time on that occasion. He was, he adds, made prisoner by the French during the expedition which terminated with the peace of Chartres in May 1360. Between 1360 and 1367 no notice has been found of him, so that it is alike uncertain if he was ransomed, and when he returned to England.

In 1367 Chaucer was one of the "Valets of the King's Chamber," or, as the Office was sometimes called, "Valet of the King's Household," a situation always filled by gentlemen; and by the designation of "dilectus Valettus noster," the King, in consideration of his former and future services, granted him, on the 20th of June in that year, an annual salary of twenty marks for life, or until he should be otherwise provided for.[8]

[6] Speght, who states that a Mr. Buckley had seen a record of the Inner Temple to that effect.

[7] Leland.

[8] Rot. Pat. 41 Edw. III. p. 1. m. 13. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 829. ☞. The payment of this pension on the 6th of November 1367 is the first notice of Chau-

About that time he married Philippa, (one of the "demoiselles" or ladies in attendance on the Queen),[9] who is stated to have been the eldest daughter of Sir Payne Roet, a native of Hainault and King of Arms of Guienne, and sister of Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, once the mistress, but subsequently the wife of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster. Chaucer received his pension in November 1367, May 1368, and October 1369;[10] and being in the King's service abroad in the summer of 1370, he obtained the usual letters of protection, dated on the 20th of June in that year, to be in force until the ensuing Michaelmas.[11] He must however have returned to England a few months afterwards, because he received in person his half year's pension on the 8th of October, though in April it was paid to Walter Walshe for him;[12] and he also received it himself in 1371 and 1372.[13]

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cer on the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer, (Mich. 42 Edw. III. *Vide* Note B. at the end of the Memoir) and it is most probable that he did not obtain the appointment before June 1367.

[9] See the Remarks on Chaucer's marriage towards the end of this Memoir. Tyrwhitt says it took place in 1360, but he does not refer to any authority.

[10] Issue Rolls of the Exchequer for the 42nd Edw. III. (*Vide* Notes B. and C.) and 43rd Edw. III.

[11] Rot. Pat. 44 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 20. ⓒ.

[12] Issue Rolls 44 Edw. III. edited by Frederick Devon, Esq. 8vo. 1835, pp. 19, 289.

[13] Issue Rolls, 45, 46, and 47 Edw. III.

On the 12th of November 1372, Chaucer being then one of the King's Esquires, was joined in a Commission with James Pronam and John de Mari, citizens of Genoa, to treat with the Duke, Citizens, and Merchants of Genoa for the purpose of choosing some port in England where the Genoese might form a commercial establishment.[14]

An advance of 66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* was made to Chaucer on the 1st of December 1372, for his expenses,[15] and he left England soon after. All that is known of this mission is that he went to Florence as well as Genoa;[16] that he had returned before the 22nd of November 1373;[16] and that on the 4th of February 1374, he received 25*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* at the Exchequer, for his expenses while in the King's service at Genoa and Florence in the preceding year.[16]

No circumstance in Chaucer's life has excited so much interest as his proceedings in Italy in 1373, from its having been imagined that he then visited Petrarch at Padua, and obtained from him the pathetic Tale of Griselda, which the Clerk of Oxenford recites during the Canterbury Pilgrimage; an idea entirely founded upon the probability that

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[14] Rot. Franc. 46 Edw. III. m. 8. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 964. ℭ.

[15] Issue Roll, Mich. 47 Edw. III. 1373. *Vide* Note D.

[16] He received his pension in person on that day. Issue Roll, Mich. 48 Edw. III. *Vide* Note E.

such a meeting might have taken place, and upon the following lines in the Prologue to the Clerk's Tale:—

"I wol you tell a tale, which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now ded, and nailed in his cheste,
I pray to God so yeve his soule reste.
FRAUNCEIS PETRARK, the laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike swete
Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan did of philosophie,
Or law, or other art particulere:
But deth, that wol not suffre us dwellen here,
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Hem both hath slaine, and alle we shul dye.
But forthe to tellen of this worthy man
That taught me this Tale."

It is a natural and generous wish that illustrious men, the ornaments of their several ages and countries, whom Nature, by endowing with kindred minds and her highest intellectual gifts, would seem to have destined for friends, should have been acquainted with each other; and that the admiration inspired by their respective Works should have been warmed and strengthened by personal affection. This universal feeling justifies more attention to the supposed friendship of Chaucer and Petrarch than a merely speculative question would otherwise deserve.

Tyrwhitt, after alluding to Speght's inaccurate statement, that "some write" that Chaucer and Petrarch were present at the

marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence with Violenta, daughter of Galeazzo Lord of Milan, at that city in 1369, as one occasion when he might have become known to the Italian Poet,[17] proceeds to notice his mission to Genoa in 1372 as having afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. He briefly discusses the point; but it is evident that he had not formed a conclusive opinion upon it, his doubts being founded on the distance of Genoa from Padua, and on the interview not having been mentioned by Petrarch himself, nor by his biographers. Godwin, however, after answering this objection, vehemently insists that Chaucer did actually visit Petrarch at Padua in 1373, and that he then obtained from him the Tale of Griselda.

In his ardour, Godwin has however both overlooked and mistaken some material circumstances; and his confidence in the fact not only induced him to cast unmerited reproaches upon the learned Tyrwhitt for merely presuming to express a doubt on the subject, but to give the reins to his own imagination by describing Chaucer's motives for seeking the interview, the interview itself, the feelings of the two Poets, and the very

[17] Petrarch was certainly present on that occasion; but the Rolls in the Tower have been examined without finding any evidence that Chaucer was one of the persons who formed the Duke of Clarence's retinue. The names of many of the individuals of the Duke's suite are printed in the Fœdera, N. E. vol. III. pp. 842, 843, 844.

tone and substance of their conversation![18] This interesting question will now, it is hoped, be investigated on more rational grounds.

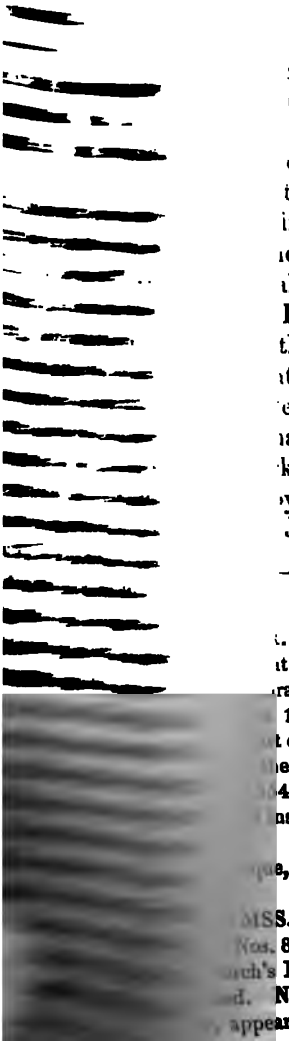
It is certain that Chaucer was not absent from England quite twelve months; namely, from December 1372 to November 1373, as he probably proceeded on his mission a few days after receiving the expenses for it; and he is likely to have applied for the payment of his pension soon after his return. All that hitherto has been known on this point is, that he was instructed to go to Genoa. It was not even certain that he actually went there; but it now appears that he was not only at Genoa in 1373, but that he was likewise sent on the King's affairs to Florence. Supposing him to have arrived at Genoa in January, to have gone to Florence a month or two afterwards, and to have remained in that city in April and May of that year, there would be nothing inconsistent with dates or probability in thinking that he might have proceeded to Padua, or to any other part of Northern Italy. It is true that in the record of the payment of his expenses in February 1374, he is only said to have been at Genoa and Florence; but this may be explained by those cities being perhaps the only places to which the King had specially sent him; and

[18] Life of Chaucer, vol. i. p. 463, et seq. For proof of the statements in the text see p. 16 antea.

if he went to Padua for his own pleasure, there would be no greater reason for mentioning that city in the Accounts of the Exchequer, than any other place through which he passed on his journey from, or return to England.

Of Petrarch's life in 1373 many circumstances are related, and they too are all consistent with the possibility of his having seen Chaucer at Padua in the spring or summer of that year. Petrarch was at Arquà, near Padua, in January 1373; and he appears to have remained there until September, on the 27th of which month he arrived at Venice to plead the cause of Francesco Novello da Carrara before the Senate. He would seem to have remained at Venice until about March 1374, as he is said to have been taken ill soon after his return to Arquà, to have languished for about four months, and to have died on the 18th, or 19th of July 1374.

The account which Petrarch gives of his translation of the Tale of Griselda in his Letter to Boccaccio, is referred to by Godwin as some evidence that the lines respecting that piece in the Canterbury Tales are to be construed as applying to Chaucer; and if Godwin's extract from that Letter were a faithful version of the original, his argument would have weight. He makes Petrarch write to Boccaccio on the 8th of June 1373, "Your work of the Decameron fell *for the first time* into my hands *in an excursion I made to*



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but the 6th Ides of June 1374. De Sade so fully relies on the accuracy of the date of 1374 as to call the Letter "perhaps Petrarch's *last* letter;" and the emphatic farewell which the Poet takes in it, alike of his friends and of correspondence, would justify such a construction, if it were really written within six weeks of his decease.[23] Moreover, there is not one word in the original of Petrarch's Letter, nor in his translation of Boccaccio's Tale, to justify Godwin's representation that the Decameron had "fallen into his hands for the first time in an excursion he had made to Arquà a few weeks before," that is, a few weeks before the 8th of June 1373 or 1374. Petrarch's translation is dated "among the Euganean Hills," namely, at Arquà; and it is not likely that a person writing "from Arquà" should have spoken "of an excursion to Arquà." Accordingly nothing of the kind occurs in Petrarch's Letter. All he says to Boccaccio on the subject is: "Librum tuum, quem nostro materno eloquio, ut opinor olim juvenis edidisti, nescio quidem, unde, vel qualiter ad me delatum vidi;" mentioning

[23] Godwin, following De Sade, explains these words by attributing them to Petrarch's disgust at having had his correspondence opened, copied, and pirated, and hence his resolution to write no more; but as no complaint of the kind occurs in the Letter itself, the pathetic conclusion may much more naturally be attributed to his feelings on the approach of death. (Vol. ii. p. 476.)

neither the time when, nor the place where, he first saw the Decameron; nor the time when he had translated the Tale of Griselda. The "first time," the "few weeks," and the "excursion to Arquà," seem therefore to have proceeded from the same prolific fancy which has attempted to supply so many chasms in Chaucer's career.

If Petrarch's Letter does not fix the time of the translation, the accuracy of its date is comparatively immaterial, except so far as it is likely that he should have sent the translation to Boccaccio soon after it was finished; but if it were not made until a few months, still more until "a few weeks," before June 1374, it is perfectly evident that he could not have given his version of the Tale to Chaucer at Padua before September 1373, when Petrarch went to Venice; nor before the November following, in which month Chaucer was unquestionably in England.

The truth is, however, that the precise time when Petrarch translated the Tale of Griselda is uncertain; though his version of it was probably made before the period, in 1373, when Chaucer might have obtained it from him at Padua, so that the interview and the communication of the Tale are both possible if not probable events. Chaucer is considered to have been well acquainted with the Decameron; and Godwin asks, with some pertinency, why he chose to confess his obligation for the Tale to Petrarch rather than to

Boccaccio, from whose volume Petrarch confessedly translated it?—questions which Godwin himself thus answers, "For this very natural reason because he was eager to commemorate his interview with this venerable patriarch of Italian letters, and to record the pleasure he had reaped from his society. Chaucer could not do this more effectually than by mentioning his having learned from the lips of Petrarch a tale which had been previously drawn up and delivered to the public by another." Confident in this theory, Godwin triumphantly adds, "We may defy all the ingenuity of criticism to invent a different solution for the simple and decisive circumstance of Chaucer's having gone out of his way in a manner which he has employed on no other occasion, to make the Clerk of Oxenford confess that he learned the story from Petrarch, and even assign the exact place of Petrarch's residence in the concluding part of his life."

However ingenious and plausible this reasoning may be, it is far from conclusive. Though Chaucer undoubtedly knew Latin and French, it is by no means certain, notwithstanding his supposed obligations to the Decameron, that he was as well acquainted with Italian. There may have been a common Latin original of the main incidents of many, if not of all the Tales, for which Chaucer is supposed to have been wholly indebted to Boccaccio; and from which originals Boccaccio himself

may have taken them. That Chaucer was not acquainted with Italian may be inferred from his not having introduced any Italian quotation into his works,[24] redundant as they are with Latin and French words and phrases. His missions to Italy will, no doubt, be mentioned by those indiscriminate worshippers of genius, who endow their idols with all human attainments, as proof of his having spoken Italian; but it should be remembered that Latin was then the universal language of the learned, which was Petrarch's motive for translating the Tale of Griselda from Italian into Latin; and there is an instance of the minister of a French Prince having declined to correspond in his vernacular language because he could neither write nor speak it,[25] while two English envoys to France in 1404, (one of whom was Sir Thomas Swynford, the nephew of Chaucer's wife,) declared to the French ambassadors that they were as ignorant of French as of Hebrew.[26] Unless then it be assumed against probability that Italian, of which there is no

[24] Though Chaucer's writings have not been examined for the purpose, the remark in the text is not made altogether from recollection, for at the end of Speght's edition of Chaucer's works, translations are given of the Latin and French words in the Poems; but not a single *Italian* word is mentioned.

[25] Journal of Bishop Beckington's Mission to the Count of Armagnac in 1442, 8vo. p. 39.

[26] Retrospective Review, New Series, Vol. I. p. 341.

proof that Chaucer knew any thing, was [redacted] familiar to him as Latin, which language [redacted] there is evidence he knew well, a sufficient reason is found for his having taken the Tale [redacted] from Petrarch's translation, rather than from [redacted] the Decameron.

It would be profitless to follow Godwin [redacted] farther through the web he has spun out of his own imagination on this subject, or to cite against himself his own equally baseless vision of Chaucer having first heard of the existence of the Decameron from Petrarch in 1373, in support of the present suggestion that he was not so greatly indebted to that work as has been supposed.

The passage before cited in the Canterbury Tales requires however a few more observations. It is in his own character only, that Chaucer appears in the Pilgrimage, in the General Prologue, the Rime of Sir Thopas, and in the prose tale of Melibeus; and each of the other personages is individually described, and has a distinct existence.

Their knowledge of the world, their wit and learning, and the skill with which their narratives are written, must of course be attributed to the Author; and some of their feelings, thoughts, and passions may have had their prototype in his own bosom. But the creator of an imaginary hero can never be safely identified with his creation; and when from a numerous groupe, a writer singles out himself in his own individual

person, acts in his own corporeal capacity, pourtrays his own physical peculiarities, and clearly and intentionally describes his own conduct, nay, when he even designates himself by name, it seems unreasonable that he should be supposed to relate a circumstance of his own life by any other mouth than his own. If, therefore, Chaucer had stated in the Rime of Sir Thopas, or in the Tale of Melibeus, where he appears in his own person, that he had learnt either of those Tales from any other writer, some faith would unquestionably be due to the statement. But the Clerk of Oxford, and others of the Pilgrims, may have been the portraits of original personages, and the Clerk might have learnt Griselda's history from Petrarch at Padua; or, far more likely, both the Clerk and the immediate source of the Tale were purely fictitious. Godwin's argument that Chaucer could have had no other motive for making those lines proceed from the Clerk's lips than an "eager desire to commemorate his interview with Petrarch," is fairly met, even if it be not destroyed, by the suggestion, that such an object would have been much more effectually attained, had he himself recited the Tale of Griselda, and given to the Clerk, (by whom it would have been both more properly and characteristically related) so moral and grave a story as that of Melibeus. Moreover, the lines on which Godwin's theory rests are scarcely consistent

with a passage towards the conclusion of the Clerk's Tale, where he speaks of Petrarch's having "written and indited" it, in a very different manner from his previous statement that he had "learned it at Padua" from Petrarch:—

> "Every wight in his degree
> Shulde be constant in adversitee,
> As was Griselde, therefore Petrark *writeth*
> *This storie, which with high stile he enditeth.*"

Until however accident brings some hitherto undiscovered document to light, Chaucer's visit to Petrarch and its attendant circumstances must remain among the many doubtful circumstances in the lives of eminent men, which their admirers wish to believe true, but for which their biographers ought to require surer evidence than what Godwin calls "coincidences which furnish a basis of historical probability."[27]

Chaucer's mission to Italy is the earliest evidence that his talents were appreciated by the Crown; and he must have performed the duties with which he was entrusted to the King's satisfaction, as he soon after received several marks of the Royal favour. By a writ, dated at Windsor on the 23rd of April 1374, a pitcher of wine daily was granted to him for life, to be received in the port of London from

[27] Vol. ii. p. 479.

the hands of the King's butler.[28] Upon this boon various observations have been written. The time and nature of the grant, and the probability of Chaucer, as one of the King's Esquires, being in attendance on his Sovereign on the 23rd of April, when the feast of Saint George was annually celebrated at Windsor, are temptations for exercising the imagination as to the circumstances under which the gift took place;[29] but this allowance was soon afterwards, if not always, commuted for a money payment; and grants of wine seem to have been frequently made with no other object.

On the 8th of June 1374, Chaucer was appointed Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and tanned Hides in the Port of London, during the King's pleasure, taking the same fees as other Comptrollers of the Customs and Subsidy. He was, like his predecessors,[30] to write the rolls of his Office with his own hand; he was to be continually present; he was to perform his duties personally and not by De-

[28] Rot. Pat. 48 Edw. III. p. 1, m. 20. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1001. ℭ.

[29] King Henry the Fourth gave John Gower, apparently the Poet, two gallons of wine in 1406. Wardrobe Accounts, Harleian MS. 319, f. 49 b.

[30] Godwin, vol. ii. p. 97, who said he had examined similar grants. These Rolls probably contain the Poet's autograph; and though not now known to exist, they may hereafter be discovered.

puty; and the other part of the seal which is called "the Coket" was to remain in his custody.[31] By a warrant dated on the 13th of the same month, the Duke of Lancaster granted Chaucer 10*l.* for life, to be paid to him at the manor of the Savoy, in consideration of the good service which he and his wife Philippa had rendered to the said Duke, to his Consort, and to his mother the Queen.[32] He received his pension of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* as one of the King's Valets in that year, and again in 1375.[33] On the 8th of November 1375 he obtained a grant of the custody of the lands and person of Edmond, son and heir of Edmond Staplegate of Kent,[34] who died in 1372;[35] but his ward became of age within three years. In the petition of the said Edmond Staplegate the son, claiming to exercise the office of Butler at the coronation of Richard the Second, by tenure of the manor of Bilsynton in Kent, he says that he had paid Chaucer for his wardship and marriage the sum of 104*l.*[36] On the 28th of December 1375 the King granted Chaucer

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[31] Rot. Pat. 48 Edw. III. p. 1, m. 7. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1004. ⓒ.

[32] Receiver's Accounts in the Office of the Duchy of Lancaster.

[33] Issue Rolls 48 and 49 Edw. III.

[34] Rot. Pat. 49 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 8. ⓒ.

[35] Esch. 46 Edw. III. n. 58.

[36] Rot. Claus. 1 Ric. II. m. 45. ⓒ.

the custody of five "solidates" of rent in Solys in Kent, which were in the King's hands, in consequence of the minority of the heir of John Solys deceased, together with the marriage of the said heir.[37] The value of this gift could not have been great; and the advantage which Chaucer derived from it is uncertain, nothing more being known of his ward than that he was the son of the deceased, that his name was William de Solys, and that he was then an infant of the age of one year.[38] The only record that has been found connected with Chaucer's execution of the Office of Comptroller of the Customs is dated on the 12th of July 1376, when the King granted him 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* being the price of some forfeited wool, because one John Kent of London had conveyed the said wool to Dordrecht without having paid the duty, which sum had been obtained as a fine from that person.[39] In May 1376 he received his own and

[37] Rot. Patent 49 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 4. A "solidate" of land, according to Blount, is as much land as is yearly worth one shilling; but there is great doubt as to its precise value.

[38] Esch. 49 Edw. III. Second Part, No. 40. The name is erroneously printed Scolys in the Index to the printed Calendar. Solys is a manor in Bonnington in the hundred of Wingham; and as the name of Solys was extinct there in the reign of Henry the Fourth, (Hasted's History of Kent, ed. 1790, vol. iii. p. 709) Chaucer's ward probably died young, and without issue. There is no later Inquisition relating to the family.

[39] Rot. Pat. 50 Edw. III. p. 1, m. 5. C.

his wife's pension at the Exchequer; and after Michaelmas an advance of fifty shillings was made to him on account of the current half year's allowance.[40] On the 18th of October 1376, and 12th of June 1377, he received his annuity from the Duke of Lancaster.[41] Soon after, he was twice paid 40*s.* by the Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, for his half yearly Robes, as one of the King's Esquires;[42] and he received 7*l.* 2*s.* 6½*d.* for his daily allowance of a pitcher of wine from the 27th of October 1376 to the 21st of June 1377.[42]

Towards the end of 1376, the King appointed Sir John Burley and Geoffrey Chaucer, to perform some secret service, the nature of which has not been ascertained. No commission appears to have been issued to them, nor did they receive the usual letters of protection, whence it may perhaps be inferred that they were not sent abroad; and, all that is known on the subject is, that on the 23rd of December in that year Sir John Burley was paid 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; and Chaucer, who is described as being in Burley's "comi-

[40] Issue Roll, Mich. 50 Edw. III.

[41] Receiver's Accounts in the Office of the Duchy of Lancaster, from Michaelmas, 50 Edw. III. to Michaelmas, 1 Ric. II. *Vide* Note F.

[42] Wardrobe Accounts of the 50 and 51 Edw. III. now in the Repository at Carlton Ride.

tiva" or retinue, 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for their wages on the occasion.[43]

In February 1377 Chaucer was associated with Sir Thomas Percy (afterwards Earl of Worcester) in a secret mission to Flanders; but, as their commission is not upon record, its object has not been discovered. Sir Thomas Percy was advanced 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* and Chaucer 10*l.* on the 17th of that month, for their expenses;[44] and a few days previously, Chaucer received letters of protection, in consequence of this mission, which were to be in force until Michaelmas in that year.[45]

Froissart states that in February 1377 Chaucer was joined with Sir Guichard d'Angle, (afterwards Earl of Huntingdon), and Sir Richard Sturry, to negociate a secret treaty for the marriage of Richard Prince of Wales with Mary, daughter of the King of France. The English envoys, he says, met those of France at Montreuil-sur-Mer, where they remained some time, and then returned to England; and in consequence of their proceedings the truce with France was prolonged to the

[43] Issue Roll, Mich. 51 Edw. III. *Vide* Note G.

[44] Ibid. *Vide* Note H.

[45] Rot. Franc. 51 Edw. III. m. 7. G. This protection was dated on the 12th of February 1377. Though by the terms of his patent Chaucer was not permitted to be absent from his duties as Comptroller of the Subsidies, the obligation evidently did not extend to any employment in the King's service.

first of the ensuing May.[46] But, as was not uncommon, Froissart has apparently blended two distinct negociations.

On the 20th of February 1377, the Bishop of Hereford, Lord Cobham, Sir John Montague, and Dr. Shepeye were empowered to treat with the French King for peace;[47] but at that time Chaucer had proceeded with Sir Thomas Percy to Flanders. He must, however, have returned to England before April following, because on the 11th of that month he himself received 20*l.* at the Exchequer, which the King had given him as a reward for divers journeys he had made in his service abroad.[48] On the 26th of that month several eminent persons, (one of whom was, as Froissart states, Sir Guichard d'Angle,) were appointed Ambassadors to negotiate a peace with France,[49] but nothing is said in their commission of power to treat for the young Prince of Wales's marriage. Though not named in that commission, Chaucer was either attached to the embassy, or was entrusted with some secret affairs of a similar nature, for on the 20th of the same month letters of protection were issued to him, to continue from that day to the 1st of August

[46] Froissart par Buchon, vol. vi. pp. 102, 305. G.
[47] Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1073.
[48] Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III. *Vide* Note I.
[49] Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1076.

ensuing,[50] he being in the King's service abroad; and on the 30th, the sum of 26*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* was paid for his wages on the occasion.[51] But the payment of his expenses for this mission some years after,[52] shews still more distinctly that the marriage was not then proposed.

Edward the Third died in June in that year; and these documents, which are the last of his reign relating to Chaucer, prove that he was still one of the King's Esquires, and that he enjoyed the Royal confidence and favour.

The accession of Richard the Second proved extremely favourable to Chaucer's interests. On the 16th of January 1378, Sir Guichard d'Angle, (who had been created Earl of Huntingdon,) Sir Hugh Segrave, and Dr. Skirlaw, were constituted Ambassadors to negotiate the King's marriage with a daughter of the French monarch.[53] Chaucer appears to have been attached to the mission, as he was afterwards paid his expenses for going to France, in that year, with the same object;[54] which facts agree, except in the dates, with Frois-

[50] Rot. Franc. 51 Edw. III. m. 5. ☞.

[51] Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III. *Vide* Note I.

[52] *Vide* p. 40 postea, and Note R.

[53] Fœdera, vol. vii. p. 184.

[54] Issue Roll, Mich. 4 Ric. II. *Vide* p. 40 postea, and Note R.

sart's statement. The annuity of twenty marks, given him by the late King, was confirmed by letters patent on the 23rd of March 1378;[55] and in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily, twenty marks a-year were granted to him on the 18th of April following.[56] Chaucer appears to have returned to England early in that year; but his talents for diplomacy were not allowed to remain long unemployed. In May 1378 he was sent with Sir Edward Berkeley to Lombardy, to treat with Bernardo Visconti Lord of Milan and the celebrated Sir John Hawkwood[57] "pro certis negociis expeditionem guerræ Regis tangentibus,"[58] a vague phrase, which there is scarcely enough information on the policy of England towards the Italian states to explain. On the 10th of May Chaucer obtained the usual letters of protection until the ensuing Christmas;[59] on the 14th of that month he was paid 20*l.* being the arrears of his pension, and he received 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* in advance

[55] Recited in the Patent of the 1st of May 1388, by which his pensions were assigned to John Scalby. Rot. Pat. 11 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 1. Ch.

[56] Ibid. and Original Writ of Privy Seal, dated 18th of April, 1 Ric. II. 1378 (*Vide* Note K); also Issue Roll, Easter 2 Ric. II. (*Vide* Note L.)

[57] A Memoir and Portrait of this remarkable person are given in the sixth volume of the Bibliotheca Topographia Britannica.

[58] Issue Roll, Easter 1 Ric. II. *Vide* Note L.

[59] Rot. Franc. p. 2, 1 Ric. II. m. 6.

for the current half year;[58] on the 21st of May he had letters of general attorney for one year, in consequence of his absence abroad;[60] and on the 28th Sir Edward Berkeley was paid 130*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* and Chaucer 56*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for their wages and expenses.[58]

Of the precise object or result of his mission to Lombardy no particulars are known; but a fact of much literary value is established by one of the documents connected with it; namely, that (as has hitherto been only presumed) Chaucer was certainly the friend of the Poet Gower. In case of any legal proceedings being instituted during his absence, it was necessary that Chaucer should appoint two persons to appear for him in the Courts; and supposing one of the individuals to have been selected merely because he was a lawyer, the other would probably have been an intimate friend, on whose ability, zeal, and honour he could entirely rely. Chaucer named John Gower and Richard Forrester (of whom nothing more has been found) as his representatives;[60] and the identity of the JOHN GOWER mentioned in that document with the Poet is not only highly probable in itself, but is supported by the name being very uncommon at that period, and by both of them being connected with the county of Kent.[61]

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[60] Rot. Franc. p. 2, 1 Ric. II. m. 6. *Vide* Note M.

[61] See the Notices of GOWER, by the present biographer of Chaucer, in the Retrospective Review, N. S. vol. ii.

The question of Chaucer and Gower's friendship has been much discussed by his biographers,[62] who consider that it existed for the greater part of their lives, but that it was dissolved some time before Chaucer's decease. At the end of "Troilus and Creseide," Chaucer thus mentions Gower:

> "O morall GOWER, this Booke I direct
> To thee, and to the philosophicall Strode,
> To vouchsafe there need is, to correct,
> Of your benignities and zeales good."

and Gower, in the "Confessio Amantis," makes Venus say:

> "And grete well CHAUCER when ye mete
> As my disciple and my Poete;
> For in the floures of his youthe,
> In sondry wyse, as he well couthe,
> Of dytees and of songes glade,
> The whiche he for my sake made,
> The lande fulfylled is over all,
> Whereof to him in specyalle,
> Above all other, I am most holde:
> For thy nowe in his dayes olde,
> Thou shalle him tell this message,
> That he uppon his latter age,
> To sett an ende of all his werke,
> As he whiche is myne owne clerke,
> Do make his Testament of Love,

[62] Tyrwhitt's Introductory Discourse to the Canterbury Tales, § 14. Todd's Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer, p. xxvii. and Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. p. 1, et seq.

As thou hast done thy shrift above,
So that my Courte yt may recorde."[63]

Tyrwhitt's grounds for supposing that their friendship afterwards ceased, are very light, as they consist only in the reflection which Chaucer makes, in the Prologue to the "Man of Lawes Tale," upon the choice of such horrible stories, or, as he calls them, "unkinde abhominations," as that of Canace and Apollonius Tyrius, both of which occur in the "Confessio Amantis," and upon the omission of the above complimentary lines in the copy of that Poem which Gower prepared after the accession of Henry the Fourth.[64] Tyrwhitt seems however to have answered his own suggestion, for he justly observes, that Chaucer could not have meant to show disrespect to Gower in a piece in which, like "the Man of Lawes Tale," almost every incident is borrowed from Gower; and that the omission of the lines alluded to in the later copy of the "Confessio Amantis," may be explained by Chaucer being then dead. The "Confessio Amantis" is stated by its author to have been written in the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard the Second, 1392-3, when Chaucer was "in his dayes old," and "in his latter age," Chaucer being then

[63] Confessio Amantis, ed. 1532, b. viii. f. 190[b], and Harleian MS. 3490.

[64] Harleian MS. 3869.

about sixty-five,[65] so that their friendship certainly endured until within seven years of his death; and the probability is that it was never dissolved.

Chaucer must have returned from Italy before February 1379, as on the 3rd of that month he received the greater part of his original pension "with his own hands."[66] He would, however, appear to have been absent from London, if not from England, between May and December in that year, for on the 24th of May 1379 the first payment of the pension granted to him by Richard the Second, together with his other annuity, were issued to him, by assignment.[67] On the 9th of the following December he was again in London, when he himself received his two pensions;[68] but in July 1380 they were paid him by assignment.[69] In November 1380 he was personally paid his wages and the expenses incurred on his mission to Lombardy, together with his half year's pensions;[70] and in March 1381 he received 22*l.* for his wages and the expenses of his missions to France in 1377, before mentioned.[71] On the 8th of May 1382

[65] *Vide* p. 11 and 12, antea.
[66] Issue Roll, Mich. 2 Ric. II. *Vide* Note N.
[67] Issue Roll, Easter 2 Ric. II. *Vide* Note O.
[68] Issue Roll, Mich. 3 Ric. II. *Vide* Note P.
[69] Issue Roll, Easter 3 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Q.
[70] Issue Roll, Mich. 4 Ric. II. *Vide* Note R.
[71] *Ibid.*

he was appointed Comptroller of the Petty Customs in the Port of London during pleasure, receiving the accustomed wages, which office he was to execute in person or by his sufficient deputy.[72] He still, however, retained the situation of Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies to which Edward the Third had appointed him; and on the 25th of November 1384 he was permitted to absent himself for one month from the duties of that office, on account of his own urgent affairs; and the Collectors of the Customs and Subsidies were commanded to swear in his deputy.[73] Another favour was conferred upon him on the 17th of the following February, by his being allowed to nominate a permanent deputy.[74] The Poet was thus partially released from duties, which, if they did not fetter his genius, must have consumed too much of his time to allow of his devoting himself to his favourite pursuits.

The next notice of Chaucer is of considerable importance. He was elected a Knight of the Shire for Kent in the Parliament which met at Westminster on the 1st of October 1386, his colleague being William Betenham, and his mainpernors William Reve and William Holt. Chaucer and Betenham were allowed 24*l.* 9*s.* for

[72] Rot. Pat. 5 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 15. ⓒ.
[73] Rot. Claus. 8. Ric. II. m. 30. ⓒ.
[74] Rot. Pat. 8 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 31. ⓒ.

their expenses in coming to, being at, and returning from the said Parliament, being 8*s.* per diem for sixty-one days.[75] This fact tends to identify the Poet with Kent, in which county it is probable that he possessed some property; for although there was then no law obliging persons who were elected Knights of a particular Shire to be residents therein, they were, in most cases, chosen from the superior gentry of the respective counties.[76] The Parliament to which Chaucer was elected did not sit after the 1st of November 1386, and all its proceedings were directed against the Ministers, who represented the party of which Chaucer's patron, the Duke of Lancaster, was the head. While attending his Parliamentary duties, Chaucer was examined at Westminster, on the 15th of October, as a witness for Richard Lord Scrope, in defence of his right to the Arms "azure a bend or," against the claim of Sir Robert Grosvenor, in which controversy numerous persons of every rank gave their testimony. His deposition is material for the information it contains respecting himself, and interesting from the anecdote he relates:

"Geoffrey Chaucer, Esquire, of the age of forty and upwards, armed for twenty-seven years, produced on behalf of Sir Richard Scrope, sworn and examined. Asked, whether

[75] Rot. Claus. 10 Ric. II. m. 16 d.

[76] *See* remarks on Knights of the Shire, Note S.

the Arms, 'Azure, a bend Or,' belonged, or ought to belong, to the said Sir Richard? said Yes, for he saw him so armed in France before the town of Retters (apparently the village of Retiers, near Rennes, in Brittany), and Sir Henry Scrope armed in the same Arms with a white label, and with a banner; and the said Sir Richard armed in the entire Arms, 'Azure, with a bend Or,' and so he had seen him armed during the whole expedition, until the said Geoffrey was taken. Asked, how he knew that the said Arms appertained to the said Sir Richard? said, that he had heard say from old Knights and Esquires that they had been reputed to be their Arms, as common fame and the public voice proved; and he also said that they had continued their possession of the said Arms; and that all his time he had seen the said Arms in banners, glass, paintings, and vestments, and commonly called the Arms of Scrope. Asked, if he had heard any one say who was the first ancestor of the said Sir Richard who first bore the said Arms? said, No, nor had he ever heard otherwise than that they were come of ancient ancestry, and of old gentry, and used the said Arms. Asked, if he had heard any one say how long a time the ancestors of the said Sir Richard had used the said Arms? said, No, but he had heard say that it passed the memory of man. Asked, whether he had ever heard of any interruption or challenge made by Sir Robert

Grosvenor, or by his ancestors, or by any one in his name, to the said Sir Richard, or to any of his ancestors? said, No; but he said that he was once in Friday Street, in London, and as he was walking in the street, he saw hanging a new sign made of the said Arms, and he asked what Inn that was that had hung out these Arms of Scrope? and one answered him and said, No, Sir, they are not hung out for the Arms of Scrope, nor painted there for those Arms, but they are painted and put there by a Knight of the county of Chester, whom men call Sir Robert Grosvenor; and that was the first time he ever heard speak of Sir Robert Grosvenor, or of his ancestors, or of any other bearing the name of Grosvenor."[77]

It does not appear that Chaucer was ever elected to Parliament except in 1386; and no other facts relating to him have been discovered between 1386 and May 1388, than the half yearly payments of his pensions.

Towards the end of 1386, Chaucer must have been superseded in both his offices; for on the 4th of December in that year, Adam Yerdeley was appointed Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies;[78] and on the

[77] De Controversia in Curia Militari inter Ricardum de Scrope et Robertum Grosvenor, Milites, Rege Ricardo Secundo, MCCCLXXXV—MCCCXC—E Recordis in Turre Londinensi Asservatis. 2 vols. 8vo. 1831, vol. i. p. 178. His deposition is also printed in the Appendix to Godwin's Life of Chaucer.

[78] Rot. Patent 10 Ric. II. pt. 1, m. 9. G.

14th of the same month, Henry Gisors was made Comptroller of the Petty Customs in the port of London.[79]

His biographers attribute Chaucer's dismissal to his having taken an active part in the dispute between the Court and the Citizens of London respecting the election of John of Northampton to the Mayoralty in 1382; and they cite various passages in the "Testament of Love," which they suppose shew that, in February 1384, when Northampton was ordered to be arrested and sent to Corfe Castle,[80] a process issued against the Poet, who fled for safety to the island of Zealand; that he remained in exile for two years; that he met many of his confederates in Zealand, who had fled from the same cause, to whom he acted with great liberality; that the persons who had the management of his affairs in England betrayed their trust; that he experienced much distress during his banishment; that he returned to England sometime in 1386, and on his arrival was sent to the Tower; that he remained in custody for three years, and was released about May 1389, at the intercession of Anne of Bohemia, Queen of Richard the Second; and that it was one condition of his pardon that he should impeach his former associates, to which terms

[79] Rot. Patent 10 Ric. II. pt. 1, m. 4. G.

[80] Rot. Claus. 7 Ric. II. m. 9. G.

he ultimately yielded. These circumstances, which, if true, would form the most important facts in Chaucer's life, stand only [81] on the authority of passages in the "Testament of Love," an allegorical composition, of which it is equally difficult to comprehend the meaning or the purport.

All these ingenious inferences and suppositions are, however, undoubtedly erroneous. Chaucer must have been in London from 1380 to May 1388, as he regularly received his pension, half yearly, at the Exchequer, with his own hands during that period;[82] and, so far from there being any record to justify such a construction of the "Testament of Love," it is certain that he held both his offices in the

[81] Mr. Todd, in his Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer, p. 309, assigns to Chaucer a Poem, at the commencement of a copy of the Canterbury Tales in the possession of the late Duke of Sutherland, in praise of Robert Vere, Earl of Oxford, which the author says was written "in a pryson colde," in the margin of which manuscript, after the word "Amen," is "per Rotheley;" but this, Mr. Todd suggests, was the name of the transcriber, and not of the author; and he adduces in support of that opinion the circumstance of one of Chaucer's pieces being attributed to his copiest Adam Scrivener, the transcriber of Boetius and of Troilus and Cresside, whose "negligence and rape" caused him "to rubbe and scrape so ofte a daye." It is however nearly certain that the Poem mentioned by Mr. Todd was written by a person called Rothley, and not by Chaucer.

[82] Issue Rolls from Easter 3 Ric. II. to Easter 11 Ric. II.

Customs from May 1382 until about December 1386; that in November 1384 he was permitted to be absent from his duties on his own private affairs, for one month; that in February 1385 he obtained the farther indulgence of being allowed to exercise his Office of Comptroller of the Subsidies by deputy; and that at the very moment when he is supposed to have been a prisoner in the Tower, he was sitting in Parliament as a Knight of the Shire for one of the largest counties in England.

Though the cause of Chaucer's dismissal from his employments in December 1386 has not been discovered, and though nothing more is known of him in 1387 and 1388 than that he received his pensions in those years,[83] it is extremely likely that he became obnoxious to Thomas Duke of Gloucester and the other Ministers, who had succeeded his patron the Duke of Lancaster in the Government. In November 1386, a Commission issued for inquiring, among other alleged abuses, into the state of the Subsidies and Customs;[84] and as the Commissioners began their duties by examining the accounts of the Officers employed in the collection of

[83] Issue Rolls, Easter 10 Ric. II. and Mich. and Easter 11 Ric. II.

[84] Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 375. Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. p. 1.

the revenue,[85] the removal of any of those persons soon afterwards, may, with much probability, be attributed to that investigation.

On the 1st of May 1388, the grants of his two pensions of twenty marks each before noticed were, at his request, cancelled; and the said annuities were assigned to John Scalby.[86] This proceeding has been considered as a proof that Chaucer, being much distressed, had sold his pensions to Scalby; and although such an inference is probable, its correctness is by no means certain.

A great change in public affairs occurred in May 1389, by the young King assuming the reins of Government and appointing new Ministers, among whom were the Duke of York, and the Earl of Derby, eldest son of the Poet's patron, John of Gaunt. The Duke of Lancaster, who was then in Guienne, was immediately recalled, and he returned to England about December in that year;[87] but before he arrived, Chaucer had found friends in the

[85] Lingard's History of England, vol. iv. p. 286. See farther remarks on this subject in Note T.

[86] Rot. Pat. 11 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 1. ⅌. It does not appear who this individual was. A John de Scalby, of Scarborough, in Yorkshire, was one of the persons of that town who were excepted from the King's pardon for insurrection in October 6 Ric. II. 1382. Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 136.

[87] Proclamations dated on the 6th and 8th of May 1389, printed in the Rolls of Parliament, vol. iv. p. 404. Walsyngham, 337. Knyghton, 2735. Lingard, iv. 303-4. Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. pp. 11, 17.

new Administration to advance his interests. On the 12th of July 1389, he was appointed to the valuable office of Clerk of the King's Works at the Palace of Westminster, Tower of London, Castle of Berkhemstead, the King's Manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham; also at the Royal Lodge of Hatherbergh in the New Forest, at the Lodges in the Parks of Clarendon, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, and at the Mews for the King's falcons at Charing Cross. His duties, which he was permitted to execute by deputy, are fully described in the patent:[88] his salary was two shillings per diem, and there were probably other sources of profit.

It is doubtful if this appointment arose from Chaucer's peculiar fitness for the situation, though passages of his writings might be adduced to shew that he possessed some knowledge of architecture. Payments were made to him as Clerk of the Works as early as the 22nd of July 1389;[89] and in July 1390 he was commanded to procure workmen and materials for the repair of St. George's Chapel at Windsor.[90] On the 22nd of January 1391 his appointment of John Elmhurst as his deputy, for repairs to be made at the Palace

[88] Rot. Pat. 13 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 30. G.

[89] Issue Roll, Easter 12 Ric. II.

[90] Rot. Pat. 14 Ric. II. m. 33. G. and Issue Roll Easter 13 Ric. II.

of Westminster, and Tower of London, was confirmed by the Crown;[91] but Chaucer must have been superseded in the same year, because on the 16th of September following, a John Gedney held that Office, so that Chaucer did not fill the situation more than two years.[92]

The cause of his removal, and his position and employment during the ensuing three years, must be left to conjecture, a resource which his biographers have freely adopted in filling up this,[93] and the other chasms in the Poet's history. All that is known of him is that he received payments as "late Clerk of the Works" on the 16th of December 1391, 4th of March and 13th of July 1392, and again in 1393;[94] and it is nearly certain that he had no other pension than the 10*l.* per annum

[91] Rot. Patent 14 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 34. "Sciatis quod Nos assignavimus Johannem Elmhurst, quem dilectus serviens noster Galfridus Chaucer clericus operationum nostrarum sub se deputavit, provisorem earundem operationum ad Palacium nostrum Westm' et Turrim nostram London' emendanda," &c. At the end are these words, "Per billam ipsius Galfridi."

[92] Rot. Patent 15 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 24. Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. iv. 67.

[93] Godwin makes Chaucer to have retired to Woodstock, "which probably he had scarcely seen for seventeen years:" he gives his sentiments at this period, and says he wrote the Canterbury Tales and quarrelled with Gower: vol. iv. pp. 58 et seq.

[94] Issue Rolls, Mich. and Easter 15 Ric. II. and Easter 16 Ric. II. He is not mentioned on the Issue Rolls of the 17 Ric. II.

granted to him by the Duke of Lancaster in 1374, and his wages as the King's Esquire, (if indeed any other pecuniary advantage was attached to that situation than an allowance of 40*s.* half yearly for robes,) and that he did not hold any office during that period.

On the 28th of February 1394 Chaucer obtained a grant from the King of 20*l.* for life, payable half yearly at Easter and Michaelmas,[95] being 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* less than the pensions he surrendered in 1388. He received his new pension for the first time on the 10th of December 1394;[96] and that he was then poor may be inferred from several advances having been soon after made to him at the Exchequer on account of his annuity, before the half yearly payments became due. Thus, on the 1st of April 1395 he obtained 10*l.* as a loan on the current half year's pension, which was repaid on the 28th of May following;[96] on the 25th of June he borrowed 10*l.*;[97] on the 9th of September 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*[97]; on the 27th of November, 8*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*;[98] and on the 1st of March 1396, 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* were paid to him, being the balance of the half year's pension, of which a large part had been advanced in the preceding November.[98] All these sums were paid into his own hands.

[95] Rot. Pat. 17 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 35. Gr.
[96] Issue Roll, Mich. 18 Ric. II. *Vide* Note U.
[97] Issue Roll, Easter 18 Ric. II. *Vide* Note V.
[98] Issue Roll, Mich 19 Ric. II. *Vide* Note W.

In 1395 or 1396, Chaucer was one of the attornies of Gregory Ballard, to receive seisin of the manor of Spitelcombe, and other lands in Kent, which tends still farther to identify him with that county.[99]

As the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer from Easter 1396 to Michaelmas 1397 have not been found, no information can be derived from them respecting Chaucer in those years: but the loss of those records seems to be fully supplied by the entry on the next existing Roll. On the 26th of October 1397, John Walden received 10*l.* for Chaucer, being the balance of 30*l.* due to him for his pensions for the three preceding half years; of which 30*l.*, he had received 10*l.* on the 25th of December 1396, 5*l.* on the 2nd of July 1397, and 5*l.* on the 9th of August in the same year.[1]

From the next record of the Poet different conclusions have been drawn, as, on the one hand, it has been considered evidence that he still enjoyed the favour of the Crown, and was employed on important public affairs; while on the other, it has been supposed to prove that he was then in great distress, harassed by his creditors, and obliged to beseech the King to protect him from the law. On the 4th of May 1398, letters of protection were issued to him, stating that whereas the King

[99] Rot. Claus. 19 Ric. II. m. 8 d.

[1] Issue Roll, Mich. 21 Ric. II. *Vide* Note X.

had appointed his beloved Esquire Geoffrey Chaucer, to perform various arduous and urgent duties in divers parts of the realm of England, and the said Geoffrey, fearing that he might be impeded in the execution thereof by his enemies,[2] by means of various suits, had prayed the King to assist him therein, and that therefore the King took the said Geoffrey, his tenants and property, into his special protection, forbidding any one to sue or arrest him on any plea except it were connected with land, for the term of two years.[3] Though in judging of this document, it must be borne in mind that similar language was often employed in other records of that nature, in cases where the party was not in pecuniary difficulties, yet the Records of the Exchequer for 1398 so strongly support the opinion that Chaucer was in distressed circumstances as to leave little doubt of the fact. It is evident that he could not wait for the payment of his pension at the usual half yearly periods, but that, as in the years 1395 and 1396, he frequently applied for money in advance. He was then old; and as part of those sums were brought to him, instead of receiving them himself, it may be inferred that he was ill or infirm, for it does not appear that he was absent from London. On the 3rd of June 1398 he received his half yearly pension of

[2] "æmulos."

[3] Rot. Pat. 21 Ric. II. p. 3, m. 26. G.

10*l.* by the hands of William Waxcombe:[4] on the 24th of July he himself[4] obtained a loan of 6*s.* 8*d.*; and a week after, namely, on the 31st, he again borrowed the same trifling sum.[4] No farther application was made until the 23rd of August, when he received 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* with his own hands;[4] and on the 28th of October he was personally paid 10*l.* on account.[5]

These details seem conclusive proof that Chaucer experienced the miseries of poverty in the latter years of his life; and it is melancholy to contemplate the venerable Poet, after such varied public services, and with those literary claims to national gratitude which posterity has so fully recognized, tottering, at the age of seventy-one, to the Exchequer for miserable pittances in advance of his pension. Happily, however, the close of his career was brightened by the bounty of his Sovereign; and his was not one of the many disgraceful instances in which Genius has been suffered to expire in penury and distress.

On the 15th of October 1398 Chaucer obtained another grant of wine; but instead of a pitcher daily, he was to receive, from the 1st of the preceding December, one ton every year during his life, in the port of London,

[4] Issue Roll, Easter 21 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Y.
[5] Issue Roll, Mich. 22 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Z.

from the King's Chief Butler or his Deputy,[6] which was probably equivalent to a pecuniary grant of about 5*l.* per annum.

A considerable improvement took place in Chaucer's fortunes on the accession of Henry the Fourth, his conduct on which event has been the subject of some injudicious remarks.[7] The Poet had for the greater part of his life been patronized by the House of Lancaster, and was nearly connected by marriage with its late Chief. He must therefore have been personally known to the new Sovereign, to whose favour he had strong pretensions. The King accordingly doubled Chaucer's pension within four days after he came to the throne, by granting him, on the 3rd of October 1399, forty marks yearly, in addition to the annuity of 20*l.* which King Richard had given him[8]; but he was destined not long to enjoy the gift.

Having made oath in Chancery that the Letters Patent of the 28th of February 1394, and 13th of October 1398, before alluded to, had been accidentally lost, he procured, on the 13th of October 1399, exemplifications of those records.[9] It would seem that

[6] Rot. Pat. 22 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 8. G.
[7] Godwin, vol. iv. p. 139. See Note p. 81 infra.
[8] Rot. Pat. 1 Hen. IV. p. 5, m. 12. G.
[9] Rot. Pat. 1 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 18. G.

Chaucer closed his days near Westminster Abbey, for on Christmas Eve 1399 he obtained a lease,[10] dated at Westminster, by which Robert Hermodesworth, a Monk and Keeper of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Westminster, with the consent of the Abbot and Convent of that place, demised to him a tenement situated in the garden of the said Chapel, for fifty-three years, at the annual rent of 2*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* If any part of the rent was in arrear for the space of fifteen days, power was given to the lessor to distrain, and if Chaucer died within that term, the premises were to revert to the Custos of the said Chapel for the time being, so that in fact the Poet had only a life-interest therein.[11]

The last notices of Chaucer are, that on Saturday the 21st of February 1400, he received the pension of 20*l.* granted by the late King, and which Henry the Fourth had confirmed;[12] and that on Saturday the 5th of June following, 5*l.*, being part of 8*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* due on the 1st of March, of the pension granted by Henry the Fourth, was received for him by Henry Somere,[13] who was then

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[12] Issue Roll, Mich. 1 Hen. IV. *Vide* Note AA.

[13] Issue Roll, Easter 1 Hen. IV. *Vide* Note BB.

Clerk of the Receipt of the Exchequer, afterwards Under Treasurer, and in 1408 a Baron, and subsequently Chancellor of that Court, to whom Occleve addressed two Ballads, and who was probably a relation of the "Frere John Somere" whose Kalendar is mentioned in Chaucer's Treatise on the Astrolabe.

Chaucer is said to have died on the 25th of October 1400, at the age of seventy-two, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The precise date of his decease stands on no better authority than the inscription on the tomb erected near his grave, by Nicholas Brigham, a Poet and man of literary attainments, in the year 1556, who, from veneration for Chaucer, caused his child Rachel to be buried near the spot in June 1557.[14] It appears, that a tomb had been before placed over his remains; and the above date of his decease may have been copied from it. There can, however, be little doubt of the correctness of the period assigned to Chaucer's decease; for had he lived many weeks after the end of September 1400, the payment of his pensions would have appeared on the Issue Roll of the Exchequer commencing at Michaelmas in that year and ending at Easter 1401; or at all events on some subsequent Roll.

The tomb which Brigham erected to Chaucer still remains, and forms one of the most

[14] Weever's Ancient Funeral Monuments, p. 266.

interesting objects in Poet's Corner. It is of grey marble, and occupies the north end of a square recess in the wall, having a canopy of four obtuse arches, ornamented with crochets, pinnacles, and drops, in the pointed style. In front are three panelled divisions of starred quarterfoils, containing shields with the Arms of Chaucer, viz. Per pale argent and gules, a bend counterchanged; and the same Arms also occur in an oblong compartment at the back of the recess, where the following inscription was placed, but which is now almost obliterated, from the partial decomposition and crumbling state of the marble. A small whole length portrait of Chaucer was delineated *in plano* on the north side of the inscription, but not a vestige of it is left; and the whole of the recess and canopy has recently been coloured black.[15]

"M. S.

QUI FUIT ANGLORUM VATES TER MAXIMUS OLIM,
GALFRIDUS CHAUCER CONDITUR HOC TUMULO:
ANNUM SI QUÆRAS DOMINI, SI TEMPORA VITÆ
ECCE NOTÆ SUBSUNT, QUÆ TIBI CUNCTA NOTANT.
25 OCTOBRIS 1400.
ÆRUMNARUM REQUIES MORS.
N. BRIGHAM HOS FECIT MUSARUM NOMINE SUMPTUS
1556."

[15] Neale and Brayley's History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter Westminster, vol. ii. p. 265. An engraving of this Tomb is given in Urry's edition of Chaucer's Works, fol. 1721, in Todd's Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer, and in other Works.

On the ledge of the tomb the following verses were engraved:

"SI ROGITES QUIS ERAM, FORSAN TE FAMA DOCEBIT
QUOD SI FAMA NEGAT, MUNDI QUIA GLORIA TRANSIT
HÆC MONUMENTA LEGE—"

Speght says, that the following lines occurred on the original tomb:

"Galfridus Chaucer vates, et fama poesis
Maternæ, hac sacra sum tumulatus humo;"

but they were part of an Epitaph written by Stephanus Surigonius, a Poet Laureat of Milan, and which, according to Caxton, "were wreton on a table hongyng on a pylere by his sepulture."[16]

The popular, but perhaps erroneous opinion, that the latter years of Chaucer's life were spent at Woodstock, or at Donington, has made it necessary, in the opinion of one of his biographers,[17] to account for his being buried in Westminster Abbey; and it is accordingly said that he died while attending his private affairs in London. It is however unquestionable that Chaucer was in London in 1395, probably also in 1396 and 1397, and certainly in 1398, 1399, and 1400;

[16] Caxton's Edition of Chaucer's translation of "Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ," at the end of which is a copy of the said Verses. They are reprinted both in Speght's and in Urry's edition of Chaucer's Works.

[17] Rale.

and it is extremely likely that, at the time of his death, he was residing in the tenement near to the Abbey, of which a lease was granted to him in December 1399, and that he was therefore buried in that edifice.

Although it has not been ascertained positively whom Chaucer married, the statement that his wife was PHILIPPA, daughter and coheiress of SIR PAYNE ROET,[18] of Hainault, Guienne King of Arms, and sister of Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, (who was the mistress, and afterwards the wife, of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster) scarcely admits of a doubt. The authorities for the statement are, 1st. a Pedigree, compiled in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, a writer of the highest professional reputation;[19] 2nd. the adoption of "Gules, three Catherine wheels Or," the Arms of Roet, by Thomas Chaucer, which occur repeatedly on his tomb, as his paternal Coat, instead of the Arms usually attributed to him and to the Poet, viz. "Per pale Argent and Gules, a bend counterchanged," and which, at one period, Thomas Chaucer undoubtedly used.[20] 3rd. That John of Gaunt was the patron of the Poet,

[18] For remarks on the family of ROET *see* Note CC.

[19] This Pedigree was printed by Speght and Urry; but as the Compiler professed himself ignorant of her baptismal name, it would not appear to have been founded upon documentary evidence.

[20] A drawing of THOMAS CHAUCER's Seal, of which

of his wife, and of his supposed son, Thomas Chaucer, if not also of his daughter. 4th. That the Arms of many descendants of that Prince, by Katherine Swynford, were placed on Thomas Chaucer's tomb.

To these strong presumptive proofs that Geoffrey Chaucer married Philippa Roet, have been opposed, the facts that in January 1370, Edward the Third granted pensions to several of the "Domicellæ" of Philippa his late Queen, (who died on the 15th of August 1369), and that one of them was *Philippa Picard*, who obtained one hundred shillings per annum,[21] whence Chaucer's biographers[22]

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Though he relinquished the *Arms* of Chaucer for those of Roet, he appears to have retained the Chaucer *Crest;* and the feet of his effigy on his monument in Ewelme Church rest on a Unicorn couchant. The cause of the introduction of a Bird on the Seal is not known.

[21] Rot. Pat. 43 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 1. ❻.

[22] Tyrwhitt and Godwin. The latter (vol. ii. p. 374) says that "Philippa Pycard was unquestionably the wife of Chaucer."

have, not unreasonably, identified her as the Poet's wife, because King Richard the Second confirmed to *Philippa* Chaucer, late "una Domicellarum" of Philippa Queen of England, his predecessor's grant of ten marks a year, which annuity was paid to "Geoffrey Chaucer her husband" on the 24th of May 1381.[23] But an examination of other records has clearly proved that the inference is unfounded. The pension to Philippa Chaucer, of ten marks annually for life, was granted on the 12th of September 1366, nearly three years before the Queen's decease, by the description of "Philippa Chaucer una Domicellarum Cameræ Philippæ Reginæ Angliæ,"[24] and she was paid it as early as the 19th of February 1368.[25] The Poet must therefore have married before September 1366; and his wife could not possibly have been the Philippa *Pycard* to whom the annuity of 5*l.* was given in January 1370.

Philippa Chaucer remained in the Queen's service until her death, for among the persons of the Royal Household to whom Robes were ordered to be given at Christmas 1368, were *Philippa Chaucer*,[26] and twelve other

[23] Issue Roll, Easter 4 Ric. II. ℭ.

[24] Rot. Pat. 40 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 30.

[25] Issue Roll, Mich. 42 Edw. III. *Vide* Note DD.

[26] Thynne says he had found "a record of the Pellis Exitus in the time of Edward the Third, of a yearly stipend to *Elizabethe Chawcere*, domicelle Regine Phi-

Damoiselles,"[26] eight "sous Damoiselles," and several "Veilleresses," of the Queen's Chamber, one of which Veilleresses was *Philippa Pycard*.[27] It cannot be doubted that the Philippa Pycard, the Veilleresse of 1369, was identical with Philippa Pycard the Domicella of January 1370, and (independently of the conclusive evidence before mentioned) could not have been the wife of Chaucer, because Philippa Chaucer is shown to have been one of the Queen's principal demoiselles in 1366, 1368, and 1369, when an inferior situation in the Royal establishment was held by Philippa Pycard, who received part of her annuity, by that name, in April 1370.[28]

If, as there is reason to believe, the father of Chaucer's wife was a native of Hainault, and came to England in the retinue of Queen Philippa in 1328, it is not unlikely that Philippa Chaucer's baptismal name was given to her from being the Queen's god-daughter. It is probable that she entered the Royal Household at an early period

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lippa," whom he conjectures to have been the Poet's sister or kinswoman, and to have afterwards taken the veil at St. Helen's, London, "according," as Speght had "touched one of that profession in primo of King Richard the Second." Vide p. 69 postea.

[27] For remarks on the words "Domicellus" and "Domicella," and the names of the Demoiselles of Queen Philippa, *see* Note EE.

[28] Issue Roll, 44 Edw. III.

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On the ledge of the tomb the following verses were engraved:

" Si rogites quis eram, forsan te fama docebit
Quod si fama negat, mundi quia gloria transit
Hæc monumenta lege—"

Speght says, that the following lines occurred on the original tomb:

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[21] Rot. Pat. 43 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 1. ❺.

[22] Tyrwhitt and Godwin. The latter (vol. ii. p. 374) says that "Philippa Pycard was unquestionably the wife of Chaucer."

have, not unreasonably, identified her as the Poet's wife, because King Richard the Second confirmed to *Philippa* Chaucer, late "una Domicellarum" of Philippa Queen of England, his predecessor's grant of ten marks a year, which annuity was paid to "Geoffrey Chaucer her husband" on the 24th of May 1381.[23] But an examination of other records has clearly proved that the inference is unfounded. The pension to Philippa Chaucer, of ten marks annually for life, was granted on the 12th of September 1366, nearly three years before the Queen's decease, by the description of "Philippa Chaucer una Domicellarum Cameræ Philippæ Reginæ Angliæ,"[24] and she was paid it as early as the 19th of February 1368.[25] The Poet must therefore have married before September 1366; and his wife could not possibly have been the Philippa *Pycard* to whom the annuity of *5l.* was given in January 1370.

Philippa Chaucer remained in the Queen's service until her death, for among the persons of the Royal Household to whom Robes were ordered to be given at Christmas 1368, were *Philippa Chaucer*,[26] and twelve other

[23] Issue Roll, Easter 4 Ric. II. E.

[24] Rot. Pat. 40 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 30.

[25] Issue Roll, Mich. 42 Edw. III. *Vide* Note DD.

[26] Thynne says he had found "a record of the Pellis Exitus in the time of Edward the Third, of a yearly stipend to *Elizabethe Chawcere*, domicelle Regine Phi-

"Damoiselles,"[26] eight "sous Damoiselles," and several "Veilleresses," of the Queen's Chamber, one of which Veilleresses was *Philippa Pycard.*[27] It cannot be doubted that the Philippa Pycard, the Veilleresse of 1369, was identical with Philippa Pycard the Domicella of January 1370, and (independently of the conclusive evidence before mentioned) could not have been the wife of Chaucer, because Philippa Chaucer is shown to have been one of the Queen's principal demoiselles in 1366, 1368, and 1369, when an inferior situation in the Royal establishment was held by Philippa Pycard, who received part of her annuity, by that name, in April 1370.[28]

If, as there is reason to believe, the father of Chaucer's wife was a native of Hainault, and came to England in the retinue of Queen Philippa in 1328, it is not unlikely that Philippa Chaucer's baptismal name was given to her from being the Queen's god-daughter. It is probable that she entered the Royal Household at an early period

lippa," whom he conjectures to have been the Poet's sister or kinswoman, and to have afterwards taken the veil at St. Helen's, London, "according," as Speght had "touched one of that profession in primo of King Richard the Second." Vide p. 69 postea.

[27] For remarks on the words "Domicellus" and "Domicella," and the names of the Demoiselles of Queen Philippa, *see* Note EE.

[28] Issue Roll, 44 Edw. III.

10*l.* by the hands of William Waxcombe:[4] on the 24th of July he himself[4] obtained a loan of 6*s.* 8*d.*; and a week after, namely, on the 31st, he again borrowed the same trifling sum.[4] No farther application was made until the 23rd of August, when he received 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* with his own hands;[4] and on the 28th of October he was personally paid 10*l.* on account.[5]

These details seem conclusive proof that Chaucer experienced the miseries of poverty in the latter years of his life; and it is melancholy to contemplate the venerable Poet, after such varied public services, and with those literary claims to national gratitude which posterity has so fully recognized, tottering, at the age of seventy-one, to the Exchequer for miserable pittances in advance of his pension. Happily, however, the close of his career was brightened by the bounty of his Sovereign; and his was not one of the many disgraceful instances in which Genius has been suffered to expire in penury and distress.

On the 15th of October 1398 Chaucer obtained another grant of wine; but instead of a pitcher daily, he was to receive, from the 1st of the preceding December, one ton every year during his life, in the port of London,

[4] Issue Roll, Easter 21 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Y.
[5] Issue Roll, Mich. 22 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Z.

Arms attributed to the Poet, and which Thomas Chaucer himself once used, that person bore at his decease the Coat of ROET, namely, three wheels, evidently in allusion to the name. It was not unusual for a person to adopt the Arms of his mother, if an heiress, instead of his own paternal coat;[31] hence the change made by Thomas Chaucer in his Armorial bearings could scarcely have arisen from any other cause than his having been the son of a lady whose maiden name was Roet. If, therefore, he were proved to have been the son of Geoffrey Chaucer, the statement that the Poet married the sister of Katherine Duchess of Lancaster, would be placed almost beyond dispute, strengthened as it would be by the facts that his wife and the said Thomas Chaucer, his supposed son, were both patronized by the Duke of Lancaster,

[31] Thynne, in his "Animadversions" on Chaucer's Works, written in the reign of Henry the Eighth, speaking of Gower's Arms, says, "A difference of Arms seems a difference of Families, unless you can prove that being of one House they altered their Arms upon some just occasion, as that some of the House marrying one heir did leave his own Arms and bare the Arms of his mother, as was accustomed in times past." According to Glover's pedigree, the mother of Thomas Chaucer was the *eldest* daughter and coheiress of Sir Payne Roet. An instance of a similar change of Arms occurred in the case of Alice Duchess of Suffolk, only child of Thomas Chaucer, who adopted her mother's Arms of BURGHERSH instead of those of ROET or CHAUCER.

Chaucer closed his days near Westminster Abbey, for on Christmas Eve 1399 he obtained a lease,[10] dated at Westminster, by which Robert Hermodesworth, a Monk and Keeper of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Westminster, with the consent of the Abbot and Convent of that place, demised to him a tenement situated in the garden of the said Chapel, for fifty-three years, at the annual rent of 2*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* If any part of the rent was in arrear for the space of fifteen days, power was given to the lessor to distrain, and if Chaucer died within that term, the premises were to revert to the Custos of the said Chapel for the time being, so that in fact the Poet had only a life-interest therein.[11]

The last notices of Chaucer are, that on Saturday the 21st of February 1400, he received the pension of 20*l.* granted by the late King, and which Henry the Fourth had confirmed;[12] and that on Saturday the 5th of June following, 5*l.*, being part of 8*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* due on the 1st of March, of the pension granted by Henry the Fourth, was received for him by Henry Somere,[13] who was then

[10] An engraving of that Lease was published by the Society of Antiquaries.

[11] Printed in Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. iv. p. 365, from the original in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

[12] Issue Roll, Mich. 1 Hen. IV. *Vide* Note AA.

[13] Issue Roll, Easter 1 Hen. IV. *Vide* Note BB.

Philippa Chaucer's pension was confirmed by Richard the Second; and she apparently received it (except between 1370 and 1373, in 1378 and 1385, the reason of which omissions does not appear) from 1366 until the 18th of June 1387.[34] The money was usually paid to her through her husband; but in November 1374 by the hands of John de Hermesthorpe,[35] and in June 1377, (the Poet being then on his mission in France), by Sir Roger de Trumpington,[36] whose wife, Lady Blanch de Trumpington, was like herself, in the service of the Duchess of Lancaster. Though living in June 1387, she probably died before the end of the year, for after that time nothing is known of her; and her annuities are not recorded to have been paid subsequent to 1387. This would agree with Godwin's hypothesis,[37] that the Poet became a widower some time before his death, because in the verses addressed to "My Master Buxton," he says,

"And therefore, though I hight for to express
The sorowe and woe that is in mariage;
I dare not write of it no wickedness
Lest I myself fall eft in soche dotage."

[34] Issue Rolls passim, and the Roll for Easter 10 Ric. II.

[35] Issue Roll, Mich. 44 Edw. III. A facsimile of this entry and of the payment to her husband in that year, is given in the translation of that Roll by Frederick Devon, Esq. printed in 8vo. 1835.

[36] Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III.

[37] Vol. iv. pp. 162-3.

He is presumed, besides Thomas Chaucer, to have had a son named Lewis; for in his "Treatise on the Astrolabe," Chaucer thus addresses him: "Little Lowis, my sonne,[38] I perceive well by certaine evidences thine abilitie to learne sciences, touching numbers and proportions, and also wel consider I thy busie prayer in especiall to learne the Treatise of the Astrolabie. Then for as much as a Philosopher saith, hee wrapeth him in his friend, that condiscendeth to the rightfull prayers of his friend, therefore I have given thee a sufficient Astrolabie for our orizont, compouned after the latitude of Oxenford." Chaucer mentions him as a child, and says he was induced to compile that treatise, because the carts of the Astrolabe which he had seen were "too hard to thy tender age of ten yeare to conceive;" and that he wrote in English, "for Latine ne canst thou nat yet but smale, my little sonne."

From his speaking of "our horizon compounded after the latitude of Oxenford," it has been conjectured that he was then living near that city, where with greater probability, it is also supposed his son was at school; while from his twice fixing on the 12th of March 1391 as the day on which some cal-

[38] Lydgate also says,

"And to his sonne that called was Lowis
He made a Tretise, ful noble and of great prise,
Upon th' Astrolabour."

culations were made, it has been concluded that the piece was drawn up at that time, an inference not warranted by the premises. As the name of Lewis Chaucer has not been met with in any other place, he probably died young. It is extremely likely that Chaucer had a daughter, and also a sister, or some other relation named Elizabeth; for on the 27th of July 1377, the King exercised his right to nominate a Nun in the Priory of St. Helen's London, after the coronation, in favour of Elizabeth Chausier;[39] and on the 12th of May 1381, about sixteen years after the time when the Poet is presumed to have married, the Duke of Lancaster paid 51*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* being the expenses of making "Elizabeth Chaucy" a noviciate in the Abbey of Berking in Essex, which Elizabeth must have been a different person from the Nun of St. Helen's.[40]

In this Memoir, such facts only have been stated as are established by evidence, even at the risk of its author being classed by some future Godwin among "the writers of cold tempers and sterile imaginations, who by

[39] Original Privy Seal 1 Ric. II. in the Tower. *Vide* Note 26, p. 62 ante.

[40] Registrum Johannis Ducis Lancastriæ. It is proper to observe, that every fact that has been discovered of a Geoffrey and Philippa Chaucer, Chaucers, or Chaucy, has been attributed to the Poet and his wife, though it is not impossible, however improbable, that there were contemporaries of the same names.

their phlegmatic and desultory industry have brought discredit upon the science of antiquities," and of incurring the reproach which he has made against Mr. Tyrwhitt, of being "fascinated with the charms of a barren page, and a meagre collection of dates."[41] Those who are satisfied with probabilities, founded upon fanciful allusions to Chaucer himself or his contemporaries, in the Poet's writings, or who are pleased with ingenious speculations as to the time when, and the feelings under which his pieces were written, and what he may have said, or heard, or thought on different occasions, will have their taste amply gratified by a perusal of the most elaborate Life of Chaucer that has yet appeared,[42] which work will also shew them upon what slight and unstable foundations theories may be built. It is, however, by no means pretended that all the hypotheses which rest on passages in the Poet's works are fallacious, but it is dangerous to attach much weight to them; and the caution of a profound investigator of his productions should be constantly borne in mind:—"A few historical particulars relating to himself, which may be collected from his writings, have been taken notice of already, and perhaps a more attentive examination of his works might

[41] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. p. 478.
[42] Ibid.

*furnish* a few more. We must be cautious, however, in such an examination, of supposing allusions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote as if they were his."[43]

Chaucer's works have been carefully perused, with the object of finding facts in them for this Memoir; but, with the following few exceptions, little reliance can be placed upon any of his remarks. The "Testament of Love" has been already alluded to; and there is not space in this Memoir to comment on all the passages that seem to illustrate his feelings, opinions, character, and attainments. His writings must be closely studied to form a proper estimate of the magnitude of his genius, the extent and variety of his information, his wonderful knowledge of human nature, the boldness with which he attacked clerical abuses, and advocated the interests of honour and virtue, and more than all, of that philosophical construction of mind, which rendered him superior to the prejudices of his time, and placed him far in advance of the wisest of his contemporaries.

From internal evidence it appears that the "Canterbury Pilgrimage" was written after the year 1386. Among the pilgrims, Chaucer has introduced himself; and the following

[43] Tyrwhitt's edition of the "Canterbury Tales."

lines probably present a faithful picture of the Poet's appearance:—

——— "Our hoste to japen he began,
And than at erst he looked upon me,
And saide thus, 'What man art thou?' quod he,
'Thou lokest as thou woldest find an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approach nere, and look up merily.
Now ware you, Sires, and let this man have place;
He in the waste is shapen as wel as I,
This were a popet in an arme to embrace
For any woman, smal and faire of face.
He seemeth elvish by his contenance,
For unto no wight doth he daliance.'" [44]

He then proceeds to recite the "Rime of Sire Thopas," in which he is interrupted by the host, from its not being worth listening to, but merely "rime dogerel;" and at his request he relates the Tale of Melibeus, "a moral tale virtuous," in prose. In the "Man of Lawes Prologue," he alludes to himself by name, and mentions some of the pieces he had written:—

——— "but natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty tale sain,
But Chaucer (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem, in swiche English as he can,
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man.
And if he had not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another.
For he hath told of lovers up and doun,
Mo than Ovide made of mentioun

[44] Prologue to the "Rime of Sire Thopas."

In his Epistolis, that ben ful olde.
What shuld I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcyon,
And sithen hath he spoke of everich on
Thise noble wives, and thise lovers eke.
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Cleped the seintes legende of Cupide:
Ther may he se the large woundes wide
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thisbe;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The plaint of Dejanire, and Hermion,
Of Adriane and Ysiphilee;
The barreine ile stonding in the see;
The dreint Leandre for his fayre Hero:
The teres of Heleine, and eke the wo
Of Briseide, and of Ladomia;
The crueltee of thee, quene Medea,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals,
For thy Jason, that was of love so fals.
O Hipermestra, Penelope, Alceste,
Your wifhood he commendeth with the beste.
But certainly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wicke ensample of Canace,
That loved hire owen brother sinfully;
(Of all swiche cursed stories I say fy)
Or elles of Tyrius Appolonius,
. . . . . .
And therfore he of ful avisement
N'old never write in non of his sermons
Of swiche unkinde abhominations."

He also mentions many of his Works in ıe "Legende of Good Women." The God ' Love accuses him of being his foe, and ndering his servants

" with thy translacion,
And lettest folke from her devocion

To serve me, and holdest it folie
To serve Love; thou maiest it nat denie,
For in plain text, withouten nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the Rose,—
That is an heresie ayenst my lawe,
And makest wise folke fro me withdrawe:
And of Creseide thou hast saide as the list,
That maketh men to women lesse trist."

. . . . . .

" All be it that he can nat wel endite,
Yet hath he made leude folke delite
To serve you, in preising of your name,
He made the boke that hight the House of Fame
And eke the Death of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parliament of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite,
And many an himpne for your holy daies,
That highten balades, rondels, virelaies;
And for to speake of other holinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boece,
And made the Life also of Saint Cecile,
He made also, gone is a great while,
Origenes upon the Maudelaine:
Him ought now to have the lese paine,
He hath made many a ley and many a thing."

He says,

" Ne a trewe lover ought me nat to blame
Though that I speke a false lover some shame,
They ought rather with me for to hold
For that I of Creseide wrote or told,
Or of the Rose, what so mine author ment
Algate God wote it was mine entent
To forthren trouth in love, and it cherice,
And to ben ware fro falsenesse and fro vice,
By which ensample this was my mening."

As a " penaunce" for his " trespace,"

"Thou shalt while that thou livest yere by yere
The moste partie of thy time spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Good Women, both maidens and wives,
That weren trewe in loving all her lives."

. . . . . .

"And when this Boke is made, yeve it the Quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shene."

Love afterwards asks him,

"Hast thou nat in a booke in thy cheste
The great goodnesse of the Quene Aceste,
That turned was into a Daiesie?

. . . . . .

And I answerde againe, and said, Yes."

He likewise mentions in that piece his Poem of the "Flower and the Leaf," as is shewn in another extract.[45]

In the "House of Fame" he alludes to himself more frequently than in any other of his productions. The Eagle sent by Jupiter informs him that "the God of Thonder" had of him

——— "routhe,
That thou haste so truely
Long served ententively
His blind nephew Cupido
And faire Venus also,
Without guerdon ever yet,
And natheles hast set thy wit,
Although in thy head full little is,
To make bookes, songs, and dites,
In rime or els in cadence,

[45] Vide p. 80, postea.

As thou best canst in reverence
Of Love, and of his servaunts eke,
That have his service sought, and seke,
And painest thee to praise his art,
Although thou haddest never part;
Wherfore, also God me blesse,
Jovis halt it great humblesse,
And vertue eke, that thou wilt make
A night full oft thine head to ake,
In thy study, so thou writest,
And evermore of love enditest,
In honour of him and praisings."

Jupiter is aware that the Poet had

——— " no tidings
Of Loves folke, if they be glade,
Ne of nothing els that God made,
And not onely fro ferre countree
That no tidings commen to thee,
Not of thy very neighbours,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou hearest neither that ne this,
For whan thy labour all done is,
And hast made all thy reckenings,
In steade of rest and of new things
Thou goest home to thine house anone,
And al so dombe as a stone,
Thou sittest at another booke
Till fully dased is thy looke,
And livest thus as an Hermite,
Although thine abstinence is lite."

In this passage it is supposed that Chaucer alluded to his duties as Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies, the accounts or " reckonings " of which he was to write with his own hands. If this conjecture be true, it may also be inferred that he described his

ual habits, that he lived much alone, ssing his time, after his official duties re over, in reading; and that though in s seclusion from society he resembled a rmit, he yet was no enemy to the pleasures the table.

Jupiter's winged messenger then says to m that Fame dwelleth,

" Right so as thine owne booke telleth,"

id after describing her Palace, the Eagle ldresses him by name,

" Geffray, thou wotest well this," &c.

When asked if he had " come hider to have 'ame," he betrays extraordinary indifference o that " last infirmity of noble minds," so ommonly the attendant of Genius:

" 'Nay, forsothe, frend,' quod I,
'I come not hither, graunt mercy,
For no soch cause by my heed,
Sufficeth me as I were deed,
That no wight have my name in honde
I wot my selfe best how I stonde,
For what I drie, or what I thinke,
I wol my selfe all it drinke:
Certaine for the more parte
As ferforth as I can mine art.' "[46]

It has been suggested,[47] that in the following lines Chaucer refers to some heavy

[46] House of Fame, l. 783-792.
[47] Godwin, vol. iv. p. 29.

calamity that had then recently befallen him. Misfortunes are so numerous that there is no difficulty in supposing him to have been in affliction, without seeking for a particular cause: but if, as is supposed, he wrote the House of Fame while he held his offices in the Customs, the event alluded to may have been the last illness of his wife, who appears to have died about 1387:—

——— "Joves his grace,
As I have said will the solace
Finally with these things,
Uncouthe sightes and tidings,
To passe with thine evinesse,
Soch routh hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffredest debonairly,
And woste they selven utterly,
Desperate of all blisse,
Sith that fortune hath made a misse
The swete of all thine hertes rest,
Languish and eke in poynt to brest,
But he through his mighty melite,
Wil do thee ease, al be it lite."[48]

A few other passages will be quoted from Chaucer's Poems, in illustration of his feelings and taste. In the following lines in the Knightes Tale, he seems to shew a strong belief in predestination:—

"Destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiance that God hath sen beforne;
So strong it is, that though the world had sworne

[48] House of Fame, book iii. l. 917-930.

The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,
Yet somtime it shall fallen on a day
That falleth nat efte in a thousand yere;
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight above."

Perhaps a line in his Ballad in "Commendacion of our Ladie," justifies the opinion that he was not skilled in music:

"God wote on Musike I can not, but I gesse
Alas why so, that I might saie or syng."

In the Legende of Goode Women there is a personal description of much interest, as it shews Chaucer's deep love of Nature, whom in another place[49] he thus finely apostrophizes,

"Nature, the vicare of the Almightie Lord."

Of flowers he greatly admired the humble daisy, whose etymology he thus fancifully explains,

"The Daisie, or els the iye of the day,
The emprise and floure of floures alle;"

unless, indeed, as is not improbable, he adverts to that flower metaphorically for a lady of the name of Margaret:

"And as for me, though that I can but lite,
On bookes for to rede, I me delite,
And to hem yeve I faith and full credence,
And in mine harte have hem in reverence
So hartely, that there is game none

[49] Assemble of Foules, l. 379.

That fro my bookes maketh me to gone,
But it be seldome on the holy daie,
Save certainly whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I heare the foules sing,
And that the floures ginnen for to spring,
Farwell my booke and my devocion.
" Now have I then eke this condicion,
That above all the floures in the mede
That love I most these floures white and rede,
Soch that men callen Daisies in our toun;
To hem I have so grete affectioun,
As I saied erst, whan comen is the Maie,
That in my bedde there daweth me no daie
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen this floure ayenst the sunne sprede
Whan it up riseth early by the morow;
That blisfull sight softinith all my sorow;
So glad am I whan that I have presence
Of it, to doin it all reverence,
As she that is of all flouris floure,
Fulfillid of all vertue and honoure,
And every ilike faire and fresh of hewe,
And ever I love it, and ever ilike newe,
And ever shall till that mine harte die,
All swaere I not of this I woll not lie.
" There loved no wight hotter in his life;
And whan that it is eve I renne blithe,
As sone as evir the sunne ginneth west,
To seen this floure how it woll go to rest;
For feare of night, so hateth she derknesse,
Her chere is plainly spred in the brightnesse
Of the sunne, for there it woll unclose:
Alas that I ne had Englishe rime, or prose
Suffisaunt, this floure to praise aright,
But helpeth ye, that han conning and might,
Ye lovers, that can make of sentement;
In this case ought ye be diligent
To forthren me somwhat in my labour,
Whether ye been with the lefe or with the flour,

For well I wote that ye han here beforne
Of making ropen, and had alway the corne,
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am full glad, if I may find an eare
Of any goodly worde that ye han left;
And though it happen me to rehersen eft
That ye han in your freshe songes saied,
Forbeareth me, and beth not evill apaied,
Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
Of Love, and eke of service of the flour
Whom that I serve . . . . ."[50]

There is so much cause for supposing Chaucer to have been pressed by pecuniary difficulties towards the close of the reign of Richard the Second, that the verses "to his Emptie Purse" have the interest of reality; while the address to Henry the Fourth[51] seems a petition for that increase of his pension, which he obtained immediately afterwards:

"To you my Purse, and to none other wight,
Complayne I, for ye be my Ladie dere;
I am sorie now that ye be light,
For certes ye now make me heavie chere;
Me were as lefe laide upon a bere,

[50] Legende of Goode Women, l. 28-82.

[51] Godwin is so affected by the impropriety of Chaucer's thus addressing an Usurper as to suggest that "the Envoy" was not written by him: and unless it can be separated from the verses, he thinks that they also were the production of some other writer. (Vol. iv. p. 145). Yet Godwin was aware of Chaucer's connection with John of Gaunt, and that Henry the Fourth had doubled his pension.

For which unto your mercy thus I crie,
Be heavie againe, or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night
That I of you the blisful sowne may here,
Or see your colour lyke the sunne bright,
That of yelounesse had never pere;
Ye be my life, ye be my hertes stere;
Queene of comfort and of good companie,
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

Nowe Purse, that art to me my lives light,
And saviour, as downe in this worlde here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you woll not be my treasure,
For I am shave as nere as any frere,
But I pray unto your curtesie
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

*Explicit.*

CHAUCER UNTO THE KINGE.

O Conquerour of Brutes Albion!
Whiche that by lyne and free election
Been very King, this to you I send,
And ye that may all harmes amende
Have minde upon my supplicacion."

Chaucer more than once speaks of that "scathful harm, condition of poverty,"[52] in terms of such force and truth as would naturally proceed from one by whom its ills had been experienced; and the allusion to the subject in the House of Fame may therefore have been more than a playful fiction:

"Golde . . . . . .
As fine as ducket in Venise,
Of whiche to lite all in my pouche is."

[52] Particularly in "The Man of Lawes Tale."

A passage in the introduction to the "Treatise on the Astrolabe," as well as the mention of his son Lewis, before referred to, is somewhat of a personal nature. Among Chaucer's motives for writing it, was, he says, that "me semeth better to writen unto a child twice a good sentence then he foryete it once. And Lowis if it so be that I shew thee in my lith English as true conclusions touching this matter, and not only as true but as many and subtill conclusions as ben yshewed in Latine in any common treatise of the Astrolabie, conne the more thanke, and pray God save the King that is Lord of this langage, and all that him faith beareth and obeyeth everiche in his degree, the more and the lasse. But considereth well that I ne usurpe not to have founden this werk of my labour or of mine engine. I nam but a leaued compilatour of the labour of olde astrologiens, and have translated in mine English only for thy doctrine; and with this swerd shall I sleen envie."

If the authenticity of the following passage in some manuscripts of Chaucer's Works were unimpeachable, it would be one of the most interesting he ever wrote. At the end of "The Persones Tale," in all complete manuscripts, and in both the editions printed by Caxton, this affecting paragraph occurs:

"Now preye I to hem alle that herken this litel tretise or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken our Lord Jesu

Crist, of whom procedeth all witte and all godenesse; and if ther be any thing that displeseth hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonning, and not to my wille, that wold fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konning; for oure boke seyth, all that is writen is writen for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente. Wherfore I beseke you mekely for the mercie of God that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercie of me and foryeve me my giltes, and namely of myn translations and enditinges of worldly vanitees, the which I revoke in my Retractions, as the boke of Troilus, the boke also of Fame, the boke of the five and twenty Ladies, the boke of the Duchesse, the boke of Seint Valentines day of the Parlement of briddes, the tales of Canterbury, thilke that sounen unto sinne, the boke of the Leon, and many an other boke, if they were in my remembraunce, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, Crist of his grete mercie foryeve me the sinne. But of the translation of Boës of consolation, and other bokes of legendes of Seints, and of omelies, and moralite, and devotion, that thanke I oure Lord Jesu Crist, and his blisful mother, and alle the Seintes in heven, beseking hem that they fro hensforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to bewaile my giltes, and to stodien to the savation of my soule, and graunte me grace of verray penance, confession and satisfaction to don in this present lif, thorgh the benigne grace of him, that is King of Kinges and preste of alle prestes, that bought us with the precious blode of his herte, so that I mote ben on of hem atte the laste day of dome that shullen be saved; qui cum Deo patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen."

Tyrwhitt, in a note deserving of great attention, after fully discussing the question, expresses his suspicion of the genuineness of the passage; but there is nothing unrea-

sonable in believing that Chaucer, when verging on the grave, under the influence of spiritual counsels, and his mind filled with the most solemn and important thoughts, should have regretted the composition of any work of "worldly vanities," or in his having committed that regret to writing. At such a moment in any age, and still more when Chaucer lived, a religious mind may have reflected on some of his writings with sincere, however needless, compunction. It would therefore be unsafe to reject the addition as a forgery; but the liberties often taken by Monkish transcribers justify great hesitation in receiving as genuine whatever did not obviously form part of the original piece. One fact in favour of the authenticity of the passage must not be overlooked. Among Chaucer's works is enumerated the "Boke of the Lion," of which, it is presumed, no other notice exists than in Lydgate's Prologue to his translation of Boccaccio's Fall of Princes; and as Lydgate is nearly correct in the list he has there given of Chaucer's other productions, it is not likely that he should have ascribed the "Boke of the Leon" to him without authority, or that it should have been inserted in that addition to the Parson's Tale from Lydgate's or any other person's invention. The objection taken by Tyrwhitt to the genuineness of the passage, that the Romaunt of the Rose is not among the regretted pieces, has little force. A man who

has written much may not in enumerating his works remember the title, since he is known sometimes even to have forgotten the authorship itself, of some of his productions.

To one Poem a statement is attached which, if true, would, even more than its own pathetic character, ensure to it a profound interest, as in an early copy it is said to have been "made by him upon his dethe bedde leying in his grete anguysse."[53] Though the Verses are suspected not to be Chaucer's by some competent judges, their authenticity is fully admitted by Tyrwhitt.

Godwin also considers them genuine; and having adopted the statement respecting the circumstances under which they were composed, he comments with his usual eloquence on the satisfactory proof the verses afford of the state of mind with which Chaucer awaited the last awful change. But if they were not actually written in his last hours, they nevertheless shew him to have been deeply influenced by religion; and the less imminent the prospect of dissolution, the more likely would it be that they proceeded from habitual sentiments, and not merely from the feelings inspired by a death-bed. "They are expressive," in Godwin's opinion, of that serene

[53] Cottonian MS. Otho A XVIII. This manuscript was destroyed in the fire which consumed so many volumes of the Cottonian library. It is found, Tyrwhitt says, without that statement in two other MSS.

frame of temper, that pure and celestial equanimity which so eminently characterized the genius of Chaucer and of Shakespeare:

"Flie fro the prease, and dwell with soothfastnesse;
Suffise unto thy good, though it be small,
For horde hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse;
Prease hath envie, and wele is blent over all;
Savour no more than thee behove shall;
Rede well thy selfe that other folke canst rede,
And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

Paine thee not ech crooked to redresse,
In trust of her that tourneth as a ball,
Great rest standeth in litle businesse;
Beware also to spurne again a nall;
Strive not as doeth a crocke with a wall;
Deme thy selfe that demest others dede,
And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

That thee is sent receive in buxomenesse,
The wrastlyng of this world asketh a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wildernesse,
Forthe pilgrime, forthe beast out of thy stall,
Looke up on high, and thanke God of all,
Weive thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lede,
And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede."

It has been said that Chaucer, when not employed in his official duties, resided chiefly at Woodstock,[54] which fact is assumed from

[54] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, ii. 99 to 103; iv. 68, 169, 172. He mentions a house in Woodstock Park as being described in deeds as "Chaucer's House," but this was more probably the house of Thomas Chaucer, to whom the Manor of Woodstock was granted by Henry the Fourth, ten years after the Poet's death. Vide p. 110 postea.

some lines in his "Dream," in his "Book of the Duchess," and in his "Parliament of Birdis;" but neither of those Poems will really bear such an interpretation; and it is remarkable, that the only place in his works in which he mentions Woodstock has not been cited in support of the conjecture. Tradition, and a passage in his Treatise on the Astrolabe, are also adduced in corroboration of that statement; and he is supposed to have resided there until about 1397, when it is said by Godwin that the Duke of Lancaster presented him with Donington Castle, near Newbury in Berkshire, with the intention, "in the feudal sense, to ennoble him!"[55] Whether Chaucer ever resided at Woodstock cannot be determined; but the fact is very unlikely, and the only notice of that place in his works, by name, is in the "Cuckow and the Nightingale," wherein he says that The Parliament of Birds

> "Shall be without nay
> The morrow after Saint Valentines day,
> Under a maple that is faire and grene,
> Before the chamber window of the Quene,
> At *Woodstocke* upon the grene lay."

In that piece he observes, that

> "Love is in yong folke but rage,
> And in olde folke a great dotage,"

and speaks of himself as being "olde and unlusty."

[55] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, iv. 93—106, 173.

There are strong reasons for believing that neither Chaucer nor the Duke of Lancaster ever possessed Donington Castle. It belonged to Sir Richard Abberbury in 1392,[56] and in 1415 was the property of Sir John Phelip, the first husband of Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas Chaucer.[57] The idea, that the Poet was patronized by Queen Anne, consort of Richard the Second, arises chiefly, if not entirely, from his saying in the "Legende of Goode Women," which is stated to have been composed at her suggestion,[58]—

"And when this boke is made, zeve it to the Quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shene."—l. 496-7.

That Chaucer stood high in the favour of the Duke of Lancaster is unquestionable; but there is nothing to prove, however probable it may be, that the annuities or offices bestowed on him by the King were obtained through that Prince's influence. The piece entitled "Book of the Duchess" is said by Lydgate[59] to have been written on the de-

[56] Rot. Pat. 16 Ric. II. p. 3. m. 13.

[57] Esch. 3 Hen. V. nº 42.

[58] Lydgate says,

"This Poete wrote at the request of the Quene
A Legende of perfite holynesse
Of Good Women"

[59] "He wrote also ful many a day agone
. . . . . .
. . . The Dethe eke of Blaunche the Duchesse."

cease of Blanch, the Duke's first consort, who died in 1369, and who is thus described:

> ——— "Faire white she hete,
> That was my Ladies name right,
> She was thereto faire and bright,
> She had not her name wrong."

Chaucer himself calls it, in his Legende of Goode Women, "The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse," but it is sometimes called "Chaucer's Dream;" and the "Complaint of the Black Knight" has been thought to refer to events in the history of the Duke her husband.[60]

The little that is known of Chaucer's character is derived from the glimpses which he himself affords of his taste, habits, and feelings in his works; but with these slight exceptions, all the minute traits that impart to personal history its greatest charm are entirely lost. Without them, any account of an individual must be dry and harsh; presenting indeed a rude outline of form and features, but unattended by those lights, shades, and details which impart grace, expression, and interest, alike to painting, sculpture, and biography. While, however, it is lamented that more has not been discovered of the great Father of English Poetry, it is a matter of congratulation that after the lapse

[60] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, iii. 149 to 157.

of four centuries, so much has been ascertained respecting him. Compared with many eminent writers who lived nearer our own times, the particulars of Chaucer are numerous and satisfactory; and though all obvious, and indeed all probable sources of information have been exhausted for this Memoir, many facts may yet be discovered of him when the arrangement of the Public Records, now in progress, shall be completed.

By his literary contemporaries Chaucer's poetical genius seems to have been justly appreciated, while the documents that have been cited, show the estimation in which his abilities for public business were held by his Sovereign and the Government. It is a remarkable fact that every authentic notice of him has been derived from records of the confidence and bounty of the three Monarchs under whom he lived, or of the favour of an eminent Prince of the Blood Royal. Had he not, fortunately for the literary character of the Country, been thus distinguished and rewarded, his Works and the testimony borne to his merits by the poetical writers of his age, would now be the only proofs of his existence. Tradition throws less than her usually weak and flickering light upon his history, and even that little is of no value. He has himself told us that where genuine information is not to be obtained, we must

be satisfied with whatever may be found in "old Books:"—

"——— If that olde Bookes were away,
Ilorne were of all remembraunce the kay;
Well ought us then, honouren and beleve
These bookes, there we han non othir preve."[61]

But if nothing else were known of Chaucer than what occurs in the "books" of Occleve, Gower, Lydgate, or Bale and Leland, how imperfect and erroneous would be our knowledge of his Life!

The versatility of his talents was extraordinary. Though known to posterity only as one of the greatest of our Poets, whose productions, in variety, merit, and extent, would seem to afford sufficient occupation for the life of an ordinary man, Chaucer filled the various stations of a Soldier, of Valet and Esquire of the King's Household, of Envoy on numerous foreign missions, of Comptroller of the Customs, of Clerk of the Works, and of Member of Parliament. Nor is it improbable that other duties were entrusted to him both by the King, and by the Duke of Lancaster; for there is not the slightest information of his pursuits or employments during many years of his life. These blanks extend from his birth in 1328 until he served in the French wars in 1359; again from 1359 to 1367; from 1384 to 1386; from 1386 to 1389; and from 1395 until his decease; forming alto-

[61] Legende of Goode Women, l. 25-28.

gether, from the time he became of age in 1349, until 1393, when he was sixty-five, no less than twenty-two years. Even in many of those years in which some trace of him has been found, the notices afford no knowledge of his occupations, as they consist only of entries of the receipt of his pension.

Much attention has been paid to the amount of Chaucer's income at different periods;[62] but the extreme difficulty of ascertaining the comparative value of money between the fourteenth and nineteenth century, renders it almost impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion on the subject. There is no proof, or indeed reason to suppose, that he inherited lands or other property, or that any estate was ever permanently granted to him; and the idea of his having obtained the manor of Woodstock and Donington Castle, to which all his biographers have attached so much importance, is a delusion. From 1367 to 1388, he received a pension of twenty marks or 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per annum; and from 1374 to 1378, an allowance for a pitcher of wine daily, which was commuted for 10*l.* 5*s.* 3½*d.* a year. He had, moreover, after 1374, an annuity of 10*l.* for life from the Duke of Lancaster: his wife was in the annual receipt of ten marks after 1366; and he derived some advantage from the grant of two wardships in 1375. The joint income of him-

[62] Godwin, vol. ii. pp. 329, 494, 505.

self and his wife in the latter part of the reign of Edward the Third seems therefore to have been about 40*l.* per annum.

Besides his Pensions, Chaucer held the office of Comptroller of the Customs, the emoluments of which are not known; and though his pension was given only until he should be otherwise provided for, he received it all the time he filled that situation.

In 1378, he gained about 3*l.* per annum by the grant of an annuity of twenty marks, or 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* instead of the allowance for a pitcher of wine; but his frequent missions abroad make it impossible to estimate his resources at that time. An addition, but of uncertain amount, was made to his income in 1382 by his appointment of Comptroller of the Petty Customs. In 1386, he was superseded in both his offices; in 1388, his annuities were transferred to another person; and the pension to his wife had ceased on her death in the preceding year, so that all he is known to have received between May 1388, and his being made Clerk of the King's Works in 1389, was his pension of 10*l.* from the Duke of Lancaster. There are no means of estimating the value of the Clerkship of the Works, which, however, he did not retain more than two years; and for aught that appears to the contrary, he had nothing besides the Duke of Lancaster's annuity of 10*l.* between September 1391 and February 1394, when the King granted him 20*l.* for life. His income was

consequently about 30*l.* from 1394 to 1398; but in October of that year, it was increased by the yearly gift of a ton of wine, which was probably not worth more[63] than 5*l.* Henry the Fourth in 1399 added forty marks to his pension, making 51*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* from the Crown, and 10*l.* from the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster, being altogether 61*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum.

Godwin, who took much trouble to calculate the value of money in the fourteenth century, thinks that every sum should be multiplied by eighteen,[64] which would make Chaucer's and his wife's income between 1374 and 1387, from their pensions only, equal to about 720*l.* and in the last year of his life to 1180*l.* But this calculation is certainly much too high; and perhaps ten times the nominal value is a nearer approximation to the truth.

If then Chaucer derived only half as much from his offices as from his pensions, he must for a considerable period have had a sufficient income; and though he was latterly impoverished, his resources shortly before his death were fully equal to his necessities, even if they did not yield him the luxuries of life. From his foreign missions it is not likely that he gained much, if anything; and it is extremely improbable that he accumulated money. Had he died possessed of lands,

[63] See Godwin's inquiry on the subject, vol. ii. p. 494.
[64] Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. pp. 331, 492.

which were held of the Crown *in capite*, the fact would have been shown by an Inquisition.

In considering Chaucer's pecuniary circumstances, it should be remembered that Thomas Chaucer, of whose filiation there can be little doubt, became on his marriage about 1395, a person of extensive property and some political influence; and it would be extraordinary if he did not obtain assistance from his son. The obscurity in which all Chaucer's family relations are enveloped, makes this, however, mere matter of conjecture; but false inferences are not likely to be drawn from the usual conduct of a son to his father. Had the Poet left a Will, or had such a document been made by Thomas Chaucer, this Memoir would probably not have been so deficient in facts respecting their domestic history.

The allusions to Chaucer by his contemporaries GOWER and OCCLEVE, are extremely pleasing, their eulogiums on his merits having been founded upon personal acquaintance. Gower's verses in which he mentions him have been already cited.

OCCLEVE commemorated Chaucer not only with his pencil, but with his pen. In his Book "De Regimine Principis," he thus expresses his sorrow for his death:

"What schal I calle the, what is thi name?
Hoccleve, fadir myn, men clepen me;
Hoccleve, sone; I wis fadir yat same;

Sone, I have herd or this men speke of the;
Thou were aqueynted with CHAUCER pardee;
God have his soule best of any wyght,
Sone, I wole holde the that I have hyght.[65]

. . . . . .

Again,

"But weylawey! so is myn hert wo
That the honour of Englyssh tonge is deed
Of which I wont was han counsail and reed.
O maister deere and fadir reverent,[66]
My maister CHAUCER, flour of eloquence,
Mirour of fructuous entendement,
O universel fadir in science!
Allas that thou thyn excellent prudence
In thi bed mortel mightist naght by qwethe
What eiled Deth? allas! whi wolde he sle the?

"O Deth! though didest naght harme singuleer
In slaghtere of him, but al this land it smertith;
But nathelees yit hast thou no power
His name [to] sle; his hy vertu astertith
Unslayn fro the, which ay us lyfly hertyth
With bookes of his ornat endytyng,
That is to al this land enlumynyng."[67]

From another passage, it would seem that

[65] Harleian MS. 4866 fo. 34.

[66] The terms "Father" and "Master" were long used to indicate respect for age, and for superiority in any pursuit or science. The former is thus explained by Chaucer in the Wife of Bath's Tale:

"Now, Sire, of elde that ye repreven me:
And certes, Sire, though non auctoritee
Were in no book ye gentiles of honour
Sain that men shuld an olde wight honour
And *clepe him Fader*, for your gentillesse;
And auctours shal I finden as I gesse."

[67] Harleian MS. 4866 fo. 36.

Occleve, who was many years younger than Chaucer, had profited by his instructions:

"Mi deere maistir God his soule quyte;
And fadir CHAUCER fayn wolde han me taght,
But I was dul and lerned lite or naght."

He then laments the loss of him as "this landes verray tresor and richesse," and says, "Deth was too hasty," for

"She myghte han taried her vengeance a while,
Til that sum man had egal to the be:
Nay, lat be that; sche knew wel that this yle
May never man forth brynge like to the,
And hir office needes do mot she;
God bad hir so, I truste as for thi beste:
O maister, maister! God thi soule reste!"[68]

It is however in the part of his work "De consilio habendo in omnibus factis," that Occleve took the most effectual mode of perpetuating Chaucer. After calling him

"The firste fyndere of our faire langage,"

describing him as his "fadir," his "worthi maister," and invoking the blessed Virgin, in whose honour, he says, Chaucer had "wroot ful many a lyne," to intercede for his eternal happiness, Occleve adds,

"Althogh his lyfe be queynt,[69] the resemblaunce
Of him hath in me so fresshe lyflynesse,
That to putte othir men in remembraunce

[68] Harleian MS. 4866, fo. 39 b.
[69] Quenched, extinguished.

Of his persone I have heere his lyknesse
Do make, to this ende in sothfastnesse,
That thei that have of hym lest thought and mynde
By this peynture may ageyn him fynde."[70]

In the margin he has given the coloured portrait of Chaucer which will be afterwards described; and he says,

"The ymages that in the chirche been,
Maken folk thenke on God and on his seyntes,
Whan the ymages thei beholden and seen;
Were oft unsyte of hem causith restreyntes
Of thoughtes gode, whan a thing depeynt is,
Or entailed, if men take of it heede,
Thoght of the lyknesse it wil in hym brede.

Yit somme holden oppynyoun and sey,
That none ymages schuld i maked be;
Thei erren foule and goon out of the wey;
Of trouth have thei scant sensibilite;
Passe over that now, blessid Trinite
Uppon my maistres soule mercy have,
For him Lady eke thi mercy I crave."[71]

LYDGATE, who lived in the next generation, mentions Chaucer in terms of esteem and admiration. Speaking of the Canterbury Tales in his Prologue to the Story of Thebes, he calls him

"Floure of Poetes throughout all Bretaine;"

and in the Prologue to the Translation of Boccaccio's "Fall of Princes," where he gives a list of Chaucer's works, he says,

[70] Harleian MS. 4866, fo. 91.
[71] Ib. fo. 91.

" My maister CHAUCER, with his fresh commedi
Is deed, alas! chefe poete of Bretayne,
That somtyme made full piteous tragedies,
The fall of princes, he did also complayne,
As he that was of makyng soverayne,
Whom all this lande of right ought preferre,
Sithe of our langage he was the lode-sterre.

. . . . . .

In youthe he made a translacion
Of a boke whiche called is Trophe
In Lumbarde tonge, as men may rede and se,
And in our vulgar, long or that he deyde,
Gave it the name of Troylous and Cresseyde.
Whiche for to rede lovers them delyte,
They have therin so grete devocyon;
And to his poete also hymselfe to quyte,
Of Boecius boke The Consolacioun
Made in his tyme an hole translacion;
And to his sonne that called was Lowys
He made a treatise, full noble and of gret prise.
Upon that labour, in full notable forme
Set them in order with ther divisyons,
Menns wittes to accomplysshe and conforme,
To understonde by full expert reasons,
By domifyeng of sondrie mancions,
The rote out sought at the ascendent,
To forne or he gafe any jugement.
He wrote also full many a day agone
Daunt in Englyssh, hymself so doth expresse,
The pytous story of Ceix and Alcion,
And the Deth also of Blaunche the Duchesse;
And notably dyd his busynesse,
By great avyse his wittes to dispose
To translate The Romaynt of the Rose.
Thus in vertu he set all his entent,
Idelnesse and vices for to fle;
Of Fowles also he wrote the Parlyment,
Therin remembrynge of ryall Egles thre,
Howe in their choyse they felt adversite,

To fore Nature profered the batayle
Eche for his partye, if he wolde avayle.
He did also his diligence and payne
In our vulgar to translate and endyte
Orygene upon the Maudelayn;
And of the Lyon a boke he dyd wryte;
Of Annelida, of false Arcite
He made a Complaynte doleful and piteous;
And of the broche whiche that Vulcanus
At Thebes wrought, full diverse of nature;
Ovyde wryteth whoso therof had a sight
For high desire he shuld nat endure,
But he it had never be glade ne light,
And if he had it onys in his might,
Like as my maister saith and writeth in dede,
It to conserve he shuld aye live in drede.
This poete wrote, at the request of the quene,
A Legende of perfite holynesse,
Of good Women to fynd out nynetene
That did excell in bounte and fayrenes,
But for his labour and besinesse
Was importable his wittes to encombre
In all this world to fynd so grete a nombre.
He made the boke of Canterbury Tales,
Whan the Pylgryms rode on pylgrymage
Throughout Kent, by hylles and by dales,
And all the stories told in their passage,
Endited them full well in our langage,
Some of knighthode, some of gentilnesse,
And some of love, and some of perfitenes,
And some also of grete moralite,
Some of disporte, including grete sentence:
In prose he wrote the Tale of Melibe
And of his wife, that called was Prudence;
And of Grisildes perfite pacience;
And how the Monke of stories new and olde
Piteous tragedies by the weye tolde.
This sayed poete, my maister, in his dayes
Made and composed ful many a fresh dite,

Complaintes, ballades, roundeles, virelaies,
Full delectable to heren and to se,
For which men shulde of right and equite,
Sith he of English in making was the best,
Pray unto God to yeve his soule good rest."

But Lydgate's best eulogium is in his Praise of the Virgin Mary, printed by Caxton:

"And eke my master CHAUCERIS now is grave,
The noble rethor poete of Brytayne,
That worthy was the lawrer to have
Of poetrye, and the palme attayne,
That made first to dystylle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence
Into our tunge thrugh his excellence,
And fonde the flouris first of rethoryke
Our rude speche only to enlumyne,
That in our tunge was never none hym lyke;
For as the sonne doth in heven shyne
In mydday spere down to us by lyne,
In whos presence no sterre may appere,
Right so his ditees withouten ony pere."

To these testimonies to Chaucer's merits by his own countrymen, and probably, personal friends, can now be added a very interesting ballad (hitherto unpublished) addressed to him by EUSTACHE DESCHAMPS, a contemporary French Poet.[72] Though Deschamps professes so great an admiration of Chaucer as to call him a Socrates in phi-

[72] This ballad has been obligingly communicated by Thomas Wright, Esq. who received it from M. Paulin of Paris. It occurs in the MS. Reg. Paris, No. 7219, fol. 62.

ıophy, a Seneca in morals, and an Angel conduct, he describes him only as a "great ·anslator." He appears to have sent Chau-r, by a person called Clifford, a copy of his vn writings, and to have requested a copy one of his works in return:

"O Socrates, plains de philosophie,
Seneque en mœurs et angles en pratique,
Ovides graus en ta poeterie,
Bries en parler, saiges en rethorique,
Aigles tres haultz qui par ta theorique
Enlumines le regne d' Eneas,
L'isle aux geans, ceulx de Bruth, et qui as
Seme les fleurs et plante le rosier
Aux ignorans de la langue Pandras;
Grant translateur, noble Geoffroy Chaucier.

Tu es damours mondains dieux, en Albie,
Et de la rose, en la terre angelique
Qui dangels Saxonne est puis fleurie;
Angleterre delle ce nom s'applique.
Le derrenier en l'ethimologique
En bon Angles le livre translatas:
Et un vergier ou du plant demandas
De ceuls qui font pour eulx auctoriser,
N'a pas long temps que tu edifias,
Grant translateur, noble Geoffroy Chaucier.

A toy pour ce, de la fontaine Helye
Requier avoir un ouvrage autentique,
Dont la doys est du tout en ta baillie,
Pour rafrecir d'elle ma soix ethique:
Qu'en ma Gaule serai paralitique
Jusques a ce que tu m'abuveras.
Eustace sui qui de mon plans aras;
Mais prens en gre les euvres d'escolier
Que, par Clifford, de moy avoir pourras,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroi Chaucier.

L'ENVOY.

Poete hault loenge destinye,
Et ton jardin ne seroie qu'ortie
Considere ce qui j'ay dit premier,
Ton noble plan, ta douce melodie;
Mais pour scavoir, de rescrire te prie,
Grant translateur, noble GEOFFRY CHAUCIER."

The affection of Occleve has made Chaucer's person better known than that of any individual of his age. The portrait of which an engraving illustrates this Memoir, is taken from Occleve's painting already mentioned in the Harleian MS. 4866, which he says was painted from memory after Chaucer's decease, and which is apparently the only genuine portrait in existence. The figure, which is half-length, has a back ground of green tapestry. He is represented with grey hair and beard, which is biforked, he wears a dark coloured dress and hood, his right hand is extended, and in his left he holds a string of beads. From his vest a black case is suspended, which appears to contain a knife, or possibly "a penner,"[73] or pen-case. The expression of the countenance is intelligent; but the fire of the eye seems quenched, and evident marks of advanced age appear on the countenance. This is incomparably the best portrait of Chaucer yet discovered.

[73] "Prively a *penner* gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wrote he all his sorwe."
Marchant's Tale, l. 9753.

A full-length portrait is found in an early if not contemporary copy of Occleve's Poems in the Royal Manuscript 17 D. vi. He appears very old, with grey hair and beard: he holds a string of beads in his left hand, and his right arm is extended, as if speaking earnestly His vest, hood, stockings, and pointed boots are all black. Over the figure is written, in the same hand as the Poems, "Chaucers ymage."[74]

There is a third portrait in a copy of the Canterbury Tales made about the reign of King Henry the Fifth, being within twenty years of the Poet's death, in the Lansdowne MS. 851. The figure, which is a small full-length, is placed in the initial letter of the volume. He is dressed in a long grey gown, with red stockings, and black shoes fastened with black sandals round the ankles. His

[74] A Portrait once existed in the Cotton MS. Otho A XVIII, but it was destroyed in the fire by which that library suffered. A full-length portrait was painted in the copy of Occleve's Poems in the Harleian MS. 4826, but was long since cut out, an act thus denounced in rude doggerel about the time of Queen Elizabeth:—

"Off worthy Chawcer
Here the pickture stood
That muckh did wryght
And alle to doe us good:
Summe furyous foole
Have cutt the same in twayne
His deed doe shewe
He bare a barren brayne."

head is bare, and the hair closely cut. In his right hand he holds an open book; and a knife or pencase, as in the other portraits, is attached to his vest.

A copy of Occleve's portrait, in a manuscript in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Tyson, was engraved in the Gentleman's Magazine[75] in 1792; and if that ill executed plate can be depended upon, it differs from those before mentioned in not having the knife at his vest.

A fourth portrait is given in a copy of the Canterbury Tales now in the possession of Lord Francis Egerton, and is engraved in the "Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer." In that painting the Poet is represented on a small white horse with black harness. His figure is small, short, and rather stout: he wears a long dark-coloured dress and hood, with a girdle, and a purse or gipciere, and he is booted and spurred.

A fifth portrait on vellum, with an account of Chaucer in a modern hand, is in the Additional MS. 5141, in the British Museum, and has been lately engraved.[76] It is a full-length, and in one corner is the date 1402, and in another corner a daisy; but it has no pretensions to the genuineness of Occleve's painting in the Harleian MS. 4866, and is

[75] Vol. LXII. p. 614.

[76] Shaw's Illustrations.

perhaps not older than the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Other portraits exist in the Picture Gallery at Oxford (an engraving of which forms the frontispiece of Urry's edition of his Works, printed in 1721), in the British Museum, and at Knowle. These are on board, and resemble the one last mentioned; but they seem to have been all formed from Occleve's painting, long after his time.

Urry and Grainger mention an original portrait which "was said to have been in the possession of George Greenwood of Chasteton in Gloucestershire," taken when he was about thirty years old; and other portraits are said to be extant, but their authenticity is very questionable. The picture engraved in Godwin's Life of Chaucer, which was formerly in the house at Huntingdon in which Oliver Cromwell was born, could not possibly have been a portrait of the Poet.

All the early portraits bear much resemblance to each other; and the probability of their being strong likenesses is increased by their agreeing with the description which Chaucer has given of himself in the Canterbury Tales before quoted, wherein he says he was a "puppet," "small and fair of face," and "elvish," that is, according to Tyrwhitt, shy and reserved; and that he was in the habit of looking steadfastly on the ground.

THOMAS CHAUCER, who is presumed to have been the Poet's eldest son, was probably born about the year 1367, and became, by his marriage and services, a person of considerable importance. Between December 1391 and 1404, he married Matilda, the second daughter and coheiress of Sir John Burghersh,[77] with whom he acquired large estates in Oxfordshire, among which was Ewelme, and in many other counties. Thomas Chaucer was appointed Chief Butler to Richard the Second;[78] and on the 20th of March 1399, the King gave him twenty marks a year, in recompence of certain offices (not specified) which had been granted to him for life by the Duke of Lancaster, but to which the King had appointed William le Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire.[79] In the same month he paid the King five marks for confirmation of

[77] Esch. 15 Ric. II. p. 1, n. 8. whence it appears that Sir JOHN BURGHERSH died on Thursday after the Feast of St. Matthew (the 21st of September) 1391, leaving two daughters his coheirs, viz. Margaret, then the wife of Sir John Grenville, Knt. and fifteen years old; and Matilda, then twelve years of age. The marriage of the said Matilda with Thomas Chaucer is stated in the Inquisition taken on his decease. As their only child, Alice, Countess of Suffolk, was above thirty years of age in 1435, and above thirty-two in 1436, she must have been born about 1404, which shews that her mother, who was unmarried in 1391, must have been married before 1403.

[78] Vide Rot. Pat. 12 Hen. IV. m. 34.

[79] Rot. Pat. 22 Ric. II. p. m. 7.

two annuities of 10*l.* each, charged on the Honour of Leicester, which John late Duke of Lancaster had granted to him.[80] These facts are of importance, as they shew that he, as well as the Poet and the Poet's wife, and apparently also his daughter Elizabeth, were patronized by that Prince.

King Henry the Fourth ascended the throne in September 1399, and on the 23rd of the following month he confirmed the annuity granted to Chaucer in March 1399, of twenty marks.[81] Three days afterwards, the 26th of October 1399, the King granted to Thomas Chaucer, Esq. the Offices of Constable of Wallingford Castle and Steward of the Honours of Wallingford and St. Valery and of the Chiltern Hundreds, for life, receiving therefrom 40*l.* a year, with 10*l.* additional for his deputy.[82] In June 1400, his annuities being in arrear, the King directed the Receiver of the Honour of Leicester to pay "nostre bien aime escuier Thomas Chaucer" the sum of 10*l.* then due to him.[83] On the 5th of November 1402, he was appointed Chief Butler to the King for life;[84] and in May 1406, he

[80] Registrum Johannis Ducis Lancastriæ.

[81] Rot. Pat. 1 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 10.

[82] Rot. Patent. 1 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 10.

[83] Register of the Duchy of Lancaster, CC. No. 15, fo. 61.

[84] Rot. Patent. 4 Hen. IV. m. 19; and Rot. Parl. iv. 178 b.

was an arbitrator respecting the manor of Hinton in Northamptonshire.[85] On the 23rd of February 1411, the Queen granted him the farm of the manors of Woodstock, Hauburgh, Wotton, and Stonfield, with the hundred of Wotton, to hold the same during her life; and on the 15th of the following month, the King assigned him the said manors and hundred for life, after the Queen's death.[86] This grant, which tends to shew that Thomas Chaucer must have rendered some particular services to the Queen Consort, is the earliest evidence of the connection of any member of the Chaucer family with Woodstock. He represented Oxfordshire in Parliament in 1402, 1408, 1409, 1412, 1414, 1423, 1427, and 1429; and in the Parliament that met at Westminster on Monday after the octaves of St. Martin in 1414, he was chosen Speaker of the Commons.[87] On the 4th of June 1414, by the appellation of Thomas Chaucer "Domicellus," instead of Esquire, he was appointed a Commissioner to treat for Henry the Fifth's marriage with Katherine of France; and to receive the homage of the Duke of Burgundy.[88] In the same year he obtained a confirmation of all grants made to him by John late Duke of Lancaster, by

[85] Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 573.
[86] Rot. Patent. 12 Hen. IV. m. 7.
[87] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 35.
[88] Rot. Franc. 2 Hen. V. m. 22, and m. 19.

Richard the Second, or by Henry the Fourth.[89] In 1415, he was in the army under Henry the Fifth in France, with a retinue of twelve men-at-arms and thirty-seven archers: he was present at the battle of Agincourt;[90] and served in most of the expeditions under that monarch.[91] On the 1st of October 1417 he was one of the Ambassadors to treat for peace with France;[92] and after the accession of Henry the Sixth, Parliament consented to his holding the office of Chief Butler, which had been confirmed to him by Henry the Fourth,[93] but in which he had been superseded in March 1418.[94] In January 1424, he was appointed a member of the King's Council, with a salary of 40*l.* per annum;[95] and in May 1425, he was one of the Commissioners in Parliament to decide on the dispute between the Earl Marshal and the Earl of Warwick for precedency.[96] In February 1427, he was abroad in the King's service;[97] and he was employed on many other occasions of

[89] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 39.

[90] History of the Battle of Agincourt, ed. 1832, pp. 358. 377.

[91] Rot. Franc. 8 Hen. V. m. 4.

[92] Rot. Norman. 5 Hen. V. m. 24, and 19. Ed. 1835, pp. 167-170, 205.

[93] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 178 b.

[94] Rot. Norman. 5 Hen. V. m. 7. Ed. 1835, p. 284.

[95] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 201.

[96] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 262.

[97] Rot. Franc. 5 Hen. VI. m. 14.

trust and importance during the reigns of Henry the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth, but never attained a higher rank than that of Esquire.

Philippa Duchess of York, who was distantly related to his wife, by her Will, dated on the Feast of St. Gregory 1430-1, appointed Thomas Chaucer one of her executors, and bequeathed one hundred marks to him.[98] In 1431 he, John Forrester,[99] and others were the attornies of John Earl of Somerset, to deliver seisin of lands in Somersetshire.[1] Several notices of him occur in the Proceedings of the Privy Council,[2] whence it appears that he was often present in the Council; and his name occurs in a list prepared in February 1436, (though then dead) of persons of whom it was proposed to borrow money for support of the war in France. He was marked for the large sum of 200*l.* being much more than was demanded from any other person except the Bishops of Ex-

[98] Nichols' Royal Wills, p. 228.

[99] A Richard Forrester was one of the Poet's attornies in May 1378. John Earl of Somerset was the eldest son of Katherine Swynford by John of Gaunt; and if Thomas Chaucer was the son of Philippa Roet, he was the Earl's first cousin.

[1] Charter in the British Museum 43 E 18.

[2] Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iii. pp. 148, 155, 157, 163, 169, 266, 267, 286, and vol. iv. pp. 98, 263, 303, 304.

eter and Ely, the Dean of Lincoln, and Sir John Cornwall, afterwards Lord Fanhope.[3]

Thomas Chaucer died in November 1434,[4] and Matilda his wife on the 28th of April 1436;[5] and were buried under a handsome monument in Ewelme church in Oxfordshire, with this inscription:[6]

HIC JACENT THOMAS CHAUCER ARMIGER QUONDAM DOMINUS ISTIUS VILLÆ ET PATRONUS ISTIUS ECCLESIÆ QUI OBIIT XVII DIE MENSIS NOVEMBRIS ANNO DOMINI MCCCCXXXIV ET MATILDIS UXOR EJUS QUÆ OBIIT XXVIII DIE MENSIS APRILIS ANNO DOMINI MCCCCXXXVI.

They had only one child, ALICE CHAUCER, who must have been born about 1404, as she was found to be upwards of thirty years old at her father's death,[4] and thirty-two years of age at her mother's decease in 1436.[5] She married first Sir John Phelip, K.G., who died issueless in 1415:[7] her second husband was Thomas fourth Earl of Salisbury, who died in 1428, without children by her;[8] and about October 1430, she married Wil-

[3] Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iv. p. 323.

[4] Esch. 13 Hen. VI. No. 35. *Vide* Note GG.

[5] Esch. 15 Hen. VI. No. 53. *Vide* Note GG.

[6] Their effigies are engraved in Gough's Sepulchral Monuments; and their tomb in Speght's edition of Chaucer, and in Skelton's Antiquities of Oxfordshire.

[7] Esch. 3 Hen. V. nº. 42.

[8] Esch. 7 Hen. VI. nº. 57.

liam de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk,[9] who was created Marquess and Duke of Suffolk, by whom she had three children.[10] She appears to have adopted the Arms of Burghersh, her mother's family, instead of those of Roet or Chaucer.[11] The fate of her last husband, the Duke of Suffolk, who was attainted and beheaded in 1450, is well known.

Their eldest son, John de la Pole, who was created Duke of Suffolk in 1463, and died in 1491, married the Princess Elizabeth Plantagenet, sister of King Edward the Fourth, by whom he had a numerous family, of whom, John de la Pole, the eldest son, was created Earl of Lincoln, *vitâ patris*, and was declared by Richard the Third heir apparent to the Throne, in the event of the death of the Prince of Wales without issue, so that there was strong probability of the great great grandson of the Poet succeeding to the Crown. The Earl of Lincoln was slain at the battle

[9] The settlement made before her marriage with the Earl of Suffolk, dated 12th October, 9th Hen. VI. 1430, is among the Harleian Charters in the British Museum, marked 54 I 9.

[10] See a pedigree of De la Pole in Frost's Notices of Hull, p. 31.

[11] The Seal attached to two Deeds executed by Alice Duchess of Suffolk, one in the 37th of Hen. VI. and the other in the 9th of Edward IV., contains the Arms of De la Pole, impaling a Lion rampant, apparently Burghersh. Charters in the British Museum, 54 I. 16, and 54 I. 18.

of Stoke in 1487, and died without children; and, being attainted, his honours were forfeited. Alice Duchess of Suffolk died on the 20th of May 1475, and was buried at Ewelme, where a splendid tomb was erected to her memory.[12]

Her issue having failed, the descendants of the Poet are presumed to be extinct.

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[12] Engraved in Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, Skelton's History of Oxfordshire, and in Hollis's Monumental Effigies of Great Britain.

Many acknowledgments are due from the Author to Thomas Duffus Hardy, Esq. Deputy Keeper of the Records in the Tower: to his brother, William Hardy, Esq. of the Duchy of Lancaster Office: and to Charles Roberts, Esq. of the Record Office, Tower, for the obliging manner in which they furnished him with information from muniments in those Offices, respecting the Poet. His inquiries also received great attention from W H. Black, Esq. of the Rolls House.

# NOTES

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## NOTE A.

[Referred to p. 10.]

Leland says, Chaucer was of a noble family; Pitts, that he was the son of a Knight; and Hearne, that he was a merchant; while Speght suggests that his father might have been the "Richard Chaucer, Vintner of London," who, in 1349, bequeathed his tenement and tavern to the Church of St. Mary Aldermary. Speght also conjectures that Elizabeth Chaucer, a Nun of St. Helen's, London, was the Poet's sister, or some other relation. (See the Memoir, p. 69) The Will of the said Richard Chaucer, which was dated on Easter Day (12th of April) 1349, and proved in the Hustings Court of the City of London by Simon Chamberlain and Richard Litlebury, on the Feast of St. Margaret the Virgin (20th of July) in the same year, has been lately examined. It appears that he made the abovementioned bequest to the Church of Aldermary, and left other property to pious uses. He mentions only his deceased wife Mary, and her son Thomas Heyroun, and appointed Henry at Strete and Richard Mallyns his executors. Richard Chaucer had however by the said Mary, (or by some other wife) a son, John Chaucer, who was also a Citizen and Vintner of London; for the said Thomas Heyroun, by his Will dated on the 7th of April 1349, and also proved in the Hustings Court, appointed *his brother* [*i. e.* his half brother] John Chaucer, his Executor, and on Monday after the Feast of St. Thomas the Martyr (13th of July) in the same year, John Chaucer, by the description of "Citizen and Vintner, Executor of the Will of my brother Thomas Heyroun," executed a deed relating to some lands. (Records of the Hustings Court, 23 Edw. III.) It is possible that Richard Chaucer may have had other children besides his son John, though they, like John, are not mentioned in his Will.

In the taxation of the 6th Edw. II. 1312-13, in the counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Hertford, and Essex, the goods of a BARTHOLOMEW LE CHAUCER were valued at ten shillings, but it does not appear in which of those counties he resided. (Rot. Parl. vol. i. p. 449.) A GERARD LE CHAUCER was a Burgess of Colchester in the 24th Edw. I. (Ibid. vol. i. pp. 234. 262). A JOHN LE CHAUCER was a citizen of London in 1299, (Monasticon Anglicanum, vol. iii. p. 326. Rot. Patent. 30 Edw. I. m. 24 d.) and another JOHN CHAUCER obtained Letters of Protection, being then in an expedition abroad, on the 12th of June, 12th Edw. III. 1338, (Fœdera, vol. ii. pt. iv. p. 23.) who may have been the JOHN CHAUCER, Deputy to the King's Butler in the port of Southampton in February and November, 22 Edw. III. 1348, who seems afterwards to have held the same situation in the Port of London. (Original Writs of Privy Seal in the Rolls House.) In July 1349, a JOHN CHAUSY received a gratuity for bringing Queen Philippa a black palfrey from the Bishop of Salisbury. (Wardrobe Book, in the Rolls House). In the 29th Edw. I. 1300, a PETRUS CHAUCER was the husband of Isabella, daughter and heiress of Isabella, widow of Roger le Lorimer, late citizen of London. (Ancient Charter in Brit. Mus. 53 H. 2.) A RALPH LE CHAUSER was living in 10 Hen. III. An ELIAS CHAUSER lived in the reign of Henry the Third and Edward the First. (Thynne, cited in Speght's Life of Chaucer.) A NICHOLAS CHAUCER was summoned to attend the King's council on the 8th of June 1356. (Rot. Claus. 30 Edw. III. dors. m. 14.)

## NOTE B.

[Referred to p. 14.]

*Issue Roll of the Exchequer* Mich. 42 (Edw. III.) [1368.]

" Die Sabbati vj.to die Novembris (1367).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex xx. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per litteras suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem *per manus proprios* x. marcarum sibi libe-

randarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione de hoc termino. vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE C.

[Referred to p. 15.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 42 Edw. III. (1368.)

" Die Jovis xxv^to^. die Maii (1368).

" Galfrido Chaucere uni vallettorum Cameræ Regis cui dominus Rex xx. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso vel quousque aliter pro statu suo fuerit provisum per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem decem marcarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet de termino Pasche proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione de hoc termino.
vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE D.

[Referred to p. 16.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 47 Edw. III. (1373.)

" Die Mercurii xxiv^to^. die Novembris (1372).

" Galfrido Chaucer valletto cui dominus Rex xx. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per literas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem x. marcarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de termino Michaelis proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione inter mandata de hoc termino. vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

*Ibid.* " Die Mercurii primo die Decembris (1372).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso in secretis negociis domini Regis versus partes transmarinas de

quibus idem dominus Rex ipsum Galfridum oneravit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* super expensis suis per breve de privato sigillo inter mandata de hoc termino. Unde respondebit. lxvj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE E.

[Referred to p. 16.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 48 Edw. III. (1374.)

" Die Martis xxii. die Novembris (1373).

" Galfrido Chaucer valletto cui dominus Rex vigint[illegible] marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam[illegible] percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino[illegible] Regi impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit[illegible] In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolu[illegible] tionem decem marcarum sibi liberandarum de certo su[illegible] videlicet de termino Pasche proximo preterito per brev[illegible] suum de liberatione inter mandata de hoc termino.
vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

*Ibid.* " Die Sabbati iv. die Februarii (1374).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis in denariis sib[illegible] liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xxv.li. vj.s. viij.d. sibi debitarum per compotum secum factum ad Scaccarium compotorum, de receptis, vadiis, et expensis per ipsum in servicio Regis factis, profisciendo in negociis Regis versus partes Jannue et Florence in anno xlvii.
xxv.li. vi.s. viij.d."

## NOTE F.

[Referred to p. 32.]

EXTRACT FROM THE ACCOUNTS OF THE RECEIVER GENERAL OF JOHN DUKE OF LANCASTER FROM MICHAELMAS 50 EDW. III. 1376, TO MICHAELMAS 5 RIC. II. 1377.

" In denariis solutis Galfrido Chaucer pro annuitate sua sibi debitâ pro termino Michaelis anno l^do^. cs., per literas Domini de Warranto datas apud Sauvoye xviij^o^ die Octobris anno l^o^. [1376.]"

" Pasch. anno li^o^ Galfrido Chaucer pro annuitate sua

pro termino Paschæ, per litteras Domini de warranto datas apud Sauvoye xij° die Junii a° li° [1377] et acquietationem ipsius Galfridi super hunc compotum liberatam—c.s."

## NOTE G.

[Referred to p. 33.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 51 Edw. III.

" Die Martis xxiij°. die Dec. (1376).

" Johanni de Burlee militi misso in secretis negociis domini Regis de quibus per ipsum dominum regem extitit oneratus. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem, &c. pro vadiis suis xiij.li. vj.s. viij.d.

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso ex precepto domini Regis in comitiva predicti Johannis in eisdem secretis negociis ipsius domini Regis. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem marcarum quas dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit pro vadiis suis. vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE H.

[Referred to p. 33.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 51 Edw. III.

" Die Martis xvij°. die Februarii (1377).

"Thome de Percy militi misso in nuncium in secretis negociis domini Regis versus partes Flandrie xxxiij.li. vj.s. viij.d.

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso in consimilem nuncium versus easdem partes Flandrie. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* super expensis suis. x.li."

## NOTE I.

[Referred to p. 34]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 51 Edw. III.

" Die Sabbati xi°. die Aprilis (1377).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xx.li. quas

dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit de dono suo pro regardo suo causa diversorum viagiorum per ipsum Galfridum factorum eundo ad diversas partes transmarinas ex precepto domini Regis in obsequio ipsius domini Regis per diversas vices. xx.li."

*Ibid.* " Die Jovis xxx°. die Aprilis (1377).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso in nuncium in secretis negociis domini Regis versus partes Francie. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* super vadiis suis. xxvi.li. xiii.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE K.

[Referred to p. 36.]

### Writ of Privy Seal, 18 April 1 Ric. II. 1378.

" Richard par la grace de Dieu Roy Dengleterre et de France et Seignur Dirlande A lonurable piere en Dieu Levesque de Seint David nostre Chanceller Salut. Come nostre trescher seignur et ael le Roy qi Dieux assoille eust nadgaires en sa vie grantez de sa grace especiale par ses lettres patentes desouz son grant seal a nostre ame Esquier Geffrey Chaucer un pycher de vyn a prendre chescun jour en port de nostre Citee de Londres par les mains du Botiller de nostre dit seignur et ael ou de ses heirs pur le temps esteant ou du lieutenant de mesme le Botiller a toute la vie de mesme celui Geffrey, Nous en recompensacion du dit picher de vyn par jouret pur le bon service que lavantdit Geffrey nous ad fait et ferra en temps avenir lui eons grantez vynt marcs a prendre chescun an a nostre Escheqer a toute la vie du dit Geffrey as termes de Seint Michel et de Pasque par oveles porcions autre les vynt marcs a lui grantees par nostre dit Seignur et ael par ses lettres patentes desouz son grant Seal par nous confermees, a prendre au dit Escheqer chescun an as ditz termes par oveles porcions. Vous mandons que receves devers vous les dites lettres de nostre dit Seignur et ael faites du dit pycher de vyn par jour et ycelles cancelles en nostre Chancellerie si facez faire sur cest nostre grant noz lettres desouz nostre grant Seal en due forme. Don souz nostre prive Seal a Westm. le xviij. jour D'averill lan de nostre Regne primer."

## NOTE L.

[Referred to p. 36.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 1 Ric. II. (1378).

" Die Veneris xiiij. die Maii (1378).

"" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis cui Dominus Rex avus Regis hujus xx marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam per literas suas patentes nuper concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit eidem Galfrido percipiendas dictas xx marcas in forma predicta. In denariis sibi liberatis per assignationem sibi factam in persolutionem xx.li. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de terminis Michaelis et Pasche Ao lj°. Regis Edwardi tertii et sancti Michaelis termino proximo preterito per breve de privato sigillo.
xx.li."

" Eidem Galfrido in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprias* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de termino Michaelis proximo preterito. xxvi.s. viii.d."

*Ibid.* " Die Veneris xxviij die Maii. (1378).

" Edwardo de Berkele militi misso in nuncium regis versus partes Lumbardie tam ad dominum de Melan quam ad Johannem Hawkewode pro certis negociis expeditionem guerre regis tangentibus. In denariis per ipsum receptis super vadiis suis. cxxx.li. vj.s. viij.d."

" Galfrido Chaucer misso in comitivâ ejusdem Edwardi ad easdem partes in nuncio regis predicti. In denariis *per ipsum receptis* super vadiis suis, &c.
lxvj.li. xiijs. iiijd."

## NOTE M.

[Referred to p. 37.]

Rot. Franc. 1 Ric. II. part ii. m. 6, (1378).

" Galfridus Chauser, qui de licencia Regis versus partes transmarinas profecturus est, habet literas Regis de gene-

rali attornato sub nominibus *Johannis Gower*, et Ricardi Forrester sub alternatione ad lucrandum, &c. in quibuscunque curiis Anglie per unum annum duraturas, &c. Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium xxi°. die Maii. Willielmo de Burst' clericus Regis attornato."

## NOTE N.

[Referred to p. 40.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 2 Ric. II. (1378-9.)

"Die Jovis tercio die Februarii (1379).

"Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex Edwardus avus Regis hujus xl. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium percipiendas per literas suas, &c. concessit, &c. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios*, &c. de termino sancti Michaelis ultimo preterito. xii.li. xiii.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE O.

[Referred to p. 40.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 2 Ric. II. (1379.)

"Die Martis xxiiij^to^. die Maii (1379).

"Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex avus Regis hujus xx. marcas annuatim," &c. "concessit, &c. In denariis sibi liberatis *per assignationem* sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xiii.li. xix.s. viij.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, tercio die Februarii proximo preterito. xxvi.s. iiij.d."

Eidem Galfrido cui dominus Rex nunc xviij°. die Aprilis anno Regni sui primo xx. marcas annuatim, &c. concessit et in recompensationem unius picheri vini sibi per dominum Regem Edwardum avum Regis hujus in portu Civitatis Londoniæ per manus pincerne ejusdem Regis Edwardi et heredum suorum ad totam vitam ipsius Galfridi quolibet die percipiendas per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per assignationem* sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xii.li. iiij.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet,

tam pro rata a predicto xviij°. die Aprilis usque festum sancti Michaelis proximum sequentem quam pro termino Pasche proximo preterito. xiii.li. vi.s. iiijd.

## NOTE P.

[Referred to p. 40.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 3 Ric. II. (1379.)

" Die Veneris ix°. die Decembris (1379).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex Edwardus xx. marcas annuatim," &c. [ut prius] " concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem x. marcarum, &c. pro termino Michaelis proximo preterito.
vi.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

Eidem Galfrido cui dominus Rex nunc xx. marcas annuatim," &c. " concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem x. marcarum, &c. pro termino Michaelis. vi.li. xiij.s. iiij.d.

## NOTE Q.

[Referred to p. 40.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 3 Ric. II. (1380.)

" Die Martis 3°. die Julii (1380).

Payment was made to " Galfrido Chaucer" of the annuities due to him (under the grants from Edward the Third and Richard II.) for this term, "*per assignationem sibi factam.*" xiij.li. vj.s. viij.d."

## NOTE R.

[Referred to p. 40.]

*Issue Roll*, 4 Ric. II. (1380-1381.)

" Die Mercurii xxviij die Novembris (1380).

" Eidem Galfrido in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xiiij. librarum sibi debitarum per compotum secum factum ad scaccarium computorum de receptis vadiis et expensis suis proficiendo in Nuncio Regis ad partes Lumbardie anno primo Regni Ricardi secundi per breve de privato sigillo inter mandata de termino Pasche proximo preterito. xiiij.li."

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex Edwardus viginti marcas, &c. annuatim," &c. [ut prius] " concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem marcarum, &c. pro termino Michaelis proximo preterito, &c. vj.li. xiis. viiijd."

" Eidem Galfrido cui dominus Rex nunc xviii°. die Aprilis anno Regni sui primo viginti marcas annuatim, &c. in recompensationem unius picheri vini concessit, &c. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios*," &c. " pro termino Michaelis. vj.li. xiii.s. iiij.d."

" Die Mercurii vj die Marcii (1381).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* per assignationem sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xxij.li. quas dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit de dono suo in recompensationem vadiorum suorum et custuum per ipsum factorum eundo tam tempore regis Edwardi avi Regis hujusmodi in nuncium ejusdem avi versus Moustrell' et Parys in partibus Francie causa tractatus pacis pendentis inter predictum avum et adversarium suum Francie quam tempore domini regis nunc causa locutionis habite de maritagio inter ipsum dominum regem nunc et filiam ejusdem adversarii sui Francie. xxij.li."

## NOTE S.

[Referred to p. 42.]

It was first enacted by Stat. 1 Hen. V. c. 1, that Knights of the Shire should be residents within the counties for which they were chosen; and by Stat. 23 Hen. VI. c. 14, it was provided that Knights of the Shire "shall be notable Knights of the same counties for the which they shall be chosen, or otherwise such notable Esquires, gentlemen of birth of the same counties, as shall be able to be Knights; and no man to be such Knight which standeth in the degree of a yeoman and under." The same practice seems, however, to have prevailed for some time, before the accession of Henry the Fifth, as the Writs to Sheriffs always commanded them to return two Knights from their respective counties. See also the Rolls of Parliament, vol. ii. pp. 104, 106, 310 b, 355, 443 b; iii. 601; iv. 8 a, 350, 402. Of the persons elected for counties to the Parliament in which Chaucer represented Kent, no less than forty were actually Knights. The persons who were occasionally chosen as Knights of the Shire in Chaucer's time, are thus described by himself, in his notice of the Franklein. After alluding to the Franklein's luxurious manner of living, he says:—

"At Sessions ther was he lord and sire.
Ful often time he was *Knight of the Shire*.
An anelace and a gipciere all of silk,
Heng at his girdel, white as morwe milk.
A Shereve hadde he ben, and a Countour.
Was no wher swiche a worthy Vavasour."
Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, l. 357-362.

## NOTE T.

[Referred to p. 48.]

Lingard adds, however, "we hear not of any frauds discovered, or of defaulters punished, or grievances redressed;" but accusations and dismissals may nevertheless have taken place. That great dissatisfaction existed respecting the conduct of the Officers of Customs is shewn by the Com-

mons having in the 11th Ric. II. 1387-8, petitioned that no Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies should in future hold his Office for any other term than during good behaviour, and that if any such Officer held his Office for life, under Letters Patent, the said Patent should be revoked, and their estate in their Offices adnulled by Parliament, to which request the Royal assent was given. (Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 250.) In August 1389, after Richard had assumed the Government, the Council ordered this enactment to be enforced, and that all appointments of Custumer should in future be made, and the existing Officers confirmed, by the Tredsurer and Privy Council. (Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. p. 9.)

## NOTE U.

[Referred to p. 51.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 18. Ric. II. (1394).

" Die Jovis x°. die Decembris (1394).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex nunc xxviii° die Februarii proximo preterito viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam," &c. [ut prius] " Id denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xxxvi.s. vij.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet pro rata a predicto xxviii°. die Februarii usque ltimum diem Martii proximum sequentem.

xxxvi.s. vij.d."

" Eidem Galfrido. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet pro termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito. x.li."

*Ibid.* " Die Jovis primo die Aprilis (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino Paschæ proximo futuro x.li. unde respondebit. Postea restituit summam subscriptam ut patet in pelle xxviii° die Maii proximo sequente."

## NOTE V.

[Referred to p. 51.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 18 Ric. II. (1395).

" Die Veneris xxv^to^. die Junii (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex nunc xx.li. annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Pasche per equales portiones recipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso et impendendo per literas suas patentes concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino sancti Michaelis proximo futuro x.li. unde respondebit."

*Ibid.* Die Jovis ix°. die Septembris (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex nunc xx.li." [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super certo suo. xxvi.s. viij.d.
Unde respondebit."

## NOTE W.

[Referred to p. 51.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 19 Ric. II. (1395-6.)

" Die Sabbati xxvii°. die Novembris (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex" [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino Pasche proximo futuro. viij.li. vj.s. viij.d."

*Ibid.* " Die Mercurii primo die Marcii (1396).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex nunc viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Paschæ per equales portiones

percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum domino Regi impenso et impendendo per literas suas patentes concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, pro termino sancti Michaelis ultimo preterito, deductis vero viiij.li. vj.s. viij.d. sibi liberatis de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, xxvii°. die Novembris ultimo preterito per breve suum de liberate inter mandata de hoc termino. xxxiii.s. iiij.d."

## NOTE X.

[Referred to p. 52.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 21 Ric. II. (1397.)

" Die Veneris xxvi^to^. die Octobris (1397)

" Galfrido Chauncer cui dominus Rex nunc xx. libras annuatim," &c. [ut prius.] "In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus Johannis Walden* per assignationem sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xxx. librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, pro terminis Michaelis et Paschæ anno vicesimo et termino sancti Michaelis ultimo preterito, deductis vero viginti libris sibi liberatis de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, xxv^to^. die Decembris ultimo preterito decem libris et secundo die Julij tunc proximo sequente c. solidis et ix°. die Augusti tunc proximo sequente c. solidis. x.li."

## NOTE Y.

[Referred to p. 54.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 21 Ric. II. (1398).

" Die Lunæ tercio die Junii (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus, &c." [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus Willielmi Waxcombe* in persolutionem decem librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino Pasche proximo preterito. x.li."

*Ibid.* " Die Mercurii xxiv. die Julii (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo. vj.s. viij.d."

*Ibid.* Die Mercurii xxxi. die Julii (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo. vj.s. viij.d."

*Ibid.* Die Veneris xxiii°. die Augusti (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo. cvj.s. viiij.d."

## NOTE Z.

[Referred to p. 54.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 22. Ric. II. (1398).

" Die Lunæ xxviii° die Octobris (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex nunc xx libras" [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito. x.li."

## NOTE AA.

[Referred to p. 56.]

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 1 Hen. IV. (1399—1400).

" Die Sabbati xxj°. die Februarii (1400).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Ricardus nuper Rex Anglie secundus post conquestum viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Pasche per equales portiones percipiendas per literas suas patentes concessit quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit una cum arreragiis super

dictam annuitatem debitis usque in confirmationem earundem, In denariis per ipsum receptis de predicto Henrico (Somere) per manus Nicholai Usk thesaurarii Calesiæ in persolutionem decem librarum sibi aretro existentium de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino sancti Michælis ultimo preterito quas dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit Habendas de dono suo per breve de privato sigillo inter mandata de hoc termino."

## NOTE BB.

[Referred to p. 56.]

*Issue Roll*, Easter 1 Hen. IV. (1400.)

" Die Sabbati quinto die Junii (1400).

" Galfrido Chauncer armigero cui dominus Ricardus nuper Rex Anglie secundus viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc xxi°. die Octobris proximo preterito confirmavit et ratificavit habendas in forma predicta. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus Henrici Somere* in partem solutionis viij.li. xiii.s. v.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, pro rata a predicto xxi°. die Octobris usque ultimum diem Marcii proximum sequentem per breve suum de liberate inter mandata de hoc termino. c.s."

## NOTE CC.

[Referred to pp. 60, 66.]

It is remarkable that the name of Sir Payne Roet has not been found in any of the numerous Records that have been examined. All that has been discovered of him is the following statement in Weever's " Ancient Funeral Monuments," p. 413. " In St. Paul's near unto Sir John Beauchamp's tomb, commonly called Duke Humphrey's, upon a fair marble stone inlaid all over with brass, (of all which nothing but the heads of a few brazen nails are at this day visible) and engraven with the representation and coat arms of the party defunct

thus much of a mangled funeral inscription was of late times perspicuous to be read, as followeth:

'HIC JACET PAGANUS ROET MILES GUYENNE REX ARMORUM PATER CATHERINE DUCISSE LANCASTRIÆ.'."

Dugdale, in his History of St. Paul's, (ed. Ellis, p. 10,) merely says, that opposite Sir John Beauchamp's tomb, under a marble stone, lay Pagan Roet, King of Arms in the time of King Edward the Third.

That Katherine Duchess of Lancaster was the daughter of a person called Roët or Roelt of Hainault, is shewn by letters patent granted by her step son King Henry the Fourth, in October 1411, which recites that "divers inheritances in the county of Hainault having descended to our beloved and trusty Knight Sir Thomas Swynford, from the most renowned *Lady Katherine de Roelt*, deceased, late Duchess of Lancaster, his mother, certain persons of those parts doubting that the said Thomas, son and heir of the aforesaid Katherine, was begotten in lawful matrimony, have not, by reason of such doubts, permitted the same Thomas to possess the foresaid inheritance." The patent then proceeds to declare that he was her son and heir, and born in lawful wedlock. Rot. Pat. 13 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 35; printed in the Fœdera, vol. viii. p. 704, and in the Account of the Swynford Family in the Excerpta Historica, p. 158.

## NOTE DD.

[Referred to p. 62.]

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED RECORDS RELATING TO *PHILIPPA CHAUCER*.

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 42 Edw. III. (1368.)

"Die Sabbati xix°. die Februarii (1368).

"Philippæ Chaucer cui dominus Rex decem marcas annuatim ad scaccarium percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsam Philippam Philippe Regine Anglie impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem quinque marcarum sibi

liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, de termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito be breve suo de liberate inter mandata de hoc termino.

lxvj.s. viij d."

*Issue Roll*, Mich. 43 Edw. III. (1369.)

" Die Mercurii xxii°. die Novembris (1368).

" Philippæ Chaucer cui dominus Rex decem marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsam Philippe Regine Anglie impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem quinque marcarum sibi liberatarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, de termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito per breve de magno sigillo inter mandata de hoc termino.

lxvj.s. viij.d."

*Issue Roll*, Easter 4 Ric. II. 1381.)

" Die Veneris xxiv. die Maii (1381).

" Philippæ Chaucer nuper uni domicellarum Philippe nuper Regine Anglie, cui dominus Rex Edwardus avus Regis hujus x. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium suum percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsam tam eidem domino Regi quam dicte Regine impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus predicti Galfridi mariti sui*, in persolutionem v. marcarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videltz pro termino Pasche proximo preterito.

iij.li. vi.s. viii.d."

*Issue Roll*, Easter 10 Ric. II. (1387)

" Die Martis xviii°. die Junii.

" Philippe Chaucer, nuper uni domicellarum Philippe nuper Regine Anglie cui dominus Rex Edwardus avus Regis hujus decem marcas annuatim ad scaccarium, ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Pasche per equales portiones percipiendas pro bono servitio per

Ipsam tam eidem domino Regi quam Philippe nuper Regine Anglie impenso per literas suas patentes concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus dicti Galfridi* [Chaucer.] lxvj.s. viij.d."

[Referred to p. 64.]

Writ of John Duke of Lancaster to the Clerk of his Wardrobe, dated 2nd January 2 Ric. II. 1380, commanding him to pay (inter alia),

"A Adam Baume pour le poys de cynk hanapes et cynk covercles d'argent surorrez de lui achatez dont un poise xliiij.s. iij.d. par nous donez en la Veile de la Conception nostre Dame a un Chivaler le Seigneur de Melane, a Sauvoye, et le seconde hanape poise xxxviij.s. x.d. le tierce hanape poise xxxvij.s. viij.d. le quart hanape poise xxxiiijs. viijd. et le quint hanape poise xxxs. vd. les queux quatre hanapes ovesque leur covercles nous donasmes le jour de l'an Renoef a la maitresse notre treschere compaigne, Dame Seuche Blount, Dame Blanche de Trompyngton, et *Phelippe Chaucy*, neof livres sis soldz et unsze deniers. Et au dit Adam pour la fesure et lor des ditz cynk hanapes et cynk covercles pour chescun meindre que le pois est par cynk soldz et issint est la somme allouable oyt livres vynt troys deniers."

*Ibid.* dated 6 March 4 Ric. II. (1381.)

"Et a Robert Fransois pour deux hanapes ove covercles d'argent et surorrez de lui achatez et par nous donez lun de eux *Philippe Chaucy*, meisme le jour dys livres quatorsze soldz et deux deniers."

*Ibid.* dated 6 May 5 Ric. II. (1382.)

"A Adam Baume pur le pois ix. hanapes ove covercles d'argent et surorrez des diverses pois de lui achatez et par nous donez," &c. "le jour de l'an Renoef l'an quint" [here follows the names of the persons to whom they were respectively given] "le quint a *Philippe Chaucy*."

## NOTE EE.

[Referred to p. 63.]

It is proper to notice the opinion expressed by Tyrwhitt that the title of "Domicella" given to Philippa Pycard proves that she was *unmarried* at the time of her being in the Queen's service, because it applies equally to Philippa Chaucer. The words "Domicellus" and "Domicella" were however descriptive of station and office, and not of bachelorhood or maidenhood. The latter word is strictly synonymous with "Demoiselle,' which "signifie aussi une fille née de parens noble: il se dit aussi bien des femmes mariees que des filles." Dictionnaire de L'Academie. Philippa Pycard was probably the wife of Geoffrey Pycard, to whom the King, in 1370, granted one penny and one bushel of corn a day, for his services to the late Queen.

By a Writ of Privy Seal, dated 10th of March, 43 Edw. III. 1369, Robes were ordered to be delivered for the preceding Christmas, to "Luce atte Wode une des Dames;" to Elizabeth Chaundos, *Philippa Chaucer*, and others, "*Damoiselles*," to Mary Hervy and others, "Souz Damoiselles," and to Johanna de Londres, *Philippa Pykart*, Ellen Proudefot, and others, "Veilleresses de la Chambre nostre tres chere Compaigne la Reine." In the Roll mentioned in the text, the same Veilleresses, though designated by that name, are included among the Sous Damoiselles. The late Queen's Demoiselles to whom pensions were granted on the 20th of January 43 Edw. III. 1370, were Alice de Preston, Matilda Fisher, Johanna Kauley, Elizabeth Pershore, each ten marks; Johanna Cosin, Philippa Pycard, Agatha Lyngeyn, each one hundred shillings; and Matilda Radescroft and Agnes Saxilby each five marks. Rot. Pat. 43 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 1.

## NOTE FF.

[Referred to p. 66.]

ARMS ON THE TOMB OF THOMAS CHAUCER.

Over the head of the Effigy of THOMAS CHAUCER is a shield with the Arms of ROET only.

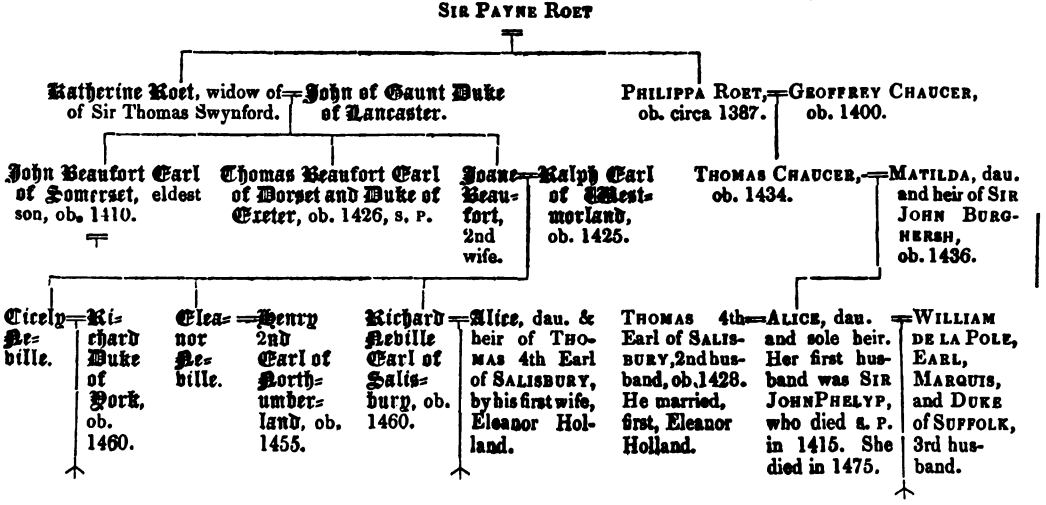
Over the head of the Effigy of his Wife, MATILDA, daughter and coheiress of SIR JOHN BURGHERSH, is a shield with the Arms of BURGHERSH only.

Below *his* feet, which rest on a *Unicorn couchant*, is a shield containing the Arms of DESPENCER, impaling BURGHERSH, shewing an alliance of the LORDS BURGHERST.

Below *her* feet, which rest on a *Lion couchant*, is a shield containing the Arms of ROET, *quartering* BURGHERSH, evidently intended for the Arms of Thomas Chaucer and his wife, there being other instances of such a combination of the husband's and wife's Arms, instead of being *impaled* in the usual manner.

In compartments round the Tomb were twenty shields, *ten* of which were indicative of the alliances of Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas Chaucer, or of different branches of the family of his wife, Maud BURGHERSH. The other shields were appropriated to the alliance of John Duke of Lancaster *with Katherine Roet, and to their descendants*, as is shown by the accompanying Pedigree. The names in black letter in that Pedigree explain *seven* of the said ten shields. Of the *three* others, *two* were filled with repetitions of the Arms of Thomas Beaufort, and *one* with the Arms of Roet, quartering Burghersh, as in the escutcheon over Thomas Chaucer's effigy.

It would thus appear that *half* of the Armorial decorations were appropriated to the alliances of Thomas Chaucer, or the aliances of his own distinguished relations, and half to those of his Wife and daughter; and (supposing him to have been the son of the Poet by Philippa Roet), some of the persons so commemorated were *his Aunt*, the Duchess of Lancaster; his three *first Cousins*, her children; and *his* three *first Cousins* once removed, her grand children, with their respective Consorts.


Sir Payne Roet
Katherine Roet, widow of Sir Thomas Swynford.
John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster.
Philippa Roet, ob. circa 1387.
Geoffrey Chaucer, ob. 1400.
John Beaufort Earl of Somerset, eldest son, ob. 1410.
Thomas Beaufort Earl of Dorset and Duke of Exeter, ob. 1426, s. p.
Joane Beaufort, 2nd wife.
Ralph Earl of Westmorland, ob. 1425.
Thomas Chaucer, ob. 1434.
Matilda, dau. and heir of Sir John Burghersh, ob. 1436.
Cicely Nevill.
Richard Duke of York, ob. 1460.
Eleanor Nevill.
Henry 2nd Earl of Northumberland, ob. 1455.
Richard Nevill Earl of Salisbury, ob. 1460.
Alice, dau. & heir of Thomas 4th Earl of Salisbury by his first wife, Eleanor Holland.
Thomas 4th Earl of Salisbury, 2nd husband, ob. 1428. He married, first, Eleanor Holland.
Alice, dau. and sole heir. Her first husband was Sir John Phelyp, who died s. p. in 1415. She died in 1475.
William de la Pole, Earl, Marquis, and Duke of Suffolk, 3rd husband.

NOTES.

## NOTE GG.

[Referred to p. 113.]

The Inquisition on the death of THOMAS CHAUCER was taken at Ipswich on the 13th of May 13 Hen. VI. 1435, and the Jury found that he held, conjointly with Matilda his wife, (who in Inquisitions taken in other Counties on his decease, is called the daughter and one of the heirs of Sir John Burghersh, Knight,) the moiety of the Manor of Stratford in the County of Suffolk, and various other lands; that he died on Thursday next before the Feast of St. dmund King and Martyr, 1434, and that Alice Countess of Suffolk was daughter and next heir of the said Thomas Chaucer, and was thirty years and upwards old.

By an Inquisition taken at Oxford, on Thursday next after the Feast of Pentecost, 15 Hen. VI. 1437, on the death of ISABELLA, who was the wife of STEPHEN HAYTPELD, Esq. it was found that she held on the day of her death, conjointly with the said Stephen, the Manor of Nywenham, for term of her life, of the gift and grant of Thomas Dru and Edward Rede, with remainder to THOMAS CHAUCER and his heirs; that the said Thomas Chaucer died on Thursday before the Feast of St. Edmund the Martyr, 13 Henry VI. 1434; that the aforesaid Isabella died on Thursday next after the Feast of the Apostles Philip and James; that Joan the wife of Drew Barantyne, and Elizabeth wife of John Wenlok, were daughters and next heirs of the said Isabella; and that Alice, the wife of William de la Pole Earl of Suffolk, was daughter and next heir of the said Thomas Chaucer, and that she was thirty-two years old and upwards. (Esch. 15 Hen. VI. No. 47.) It is most probable that Thomas Chaucer had purchased the reversion of the said manor of Nywenham.

The Inquisition taken on the death of MATILDA, the widow of THOMAS CHAUCER, shews that she died on Saturday next before the Feast of the Apostles Philip and James in 1436, seized of numerous manors in the counties of Cambridge, Bucks, Lincoln, Suffolk, Essex, Southampton, Berks, Oxford, and Lincoln, and that Alice, the wife of William de la Pole Earl of Suffolk, was her next heir, and then thirty-two years of age.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

An illustration having been accidentally found of one of the best known passages in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, it appears to justify a Note. Chaucer says of the Prioress,—

> " And *French she spake* ful fayre and fetisly,
> *After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,*
> For French of Paris was to hire unknowe."

Upon which Tyrwhitt remarks, that Chaucer thought but meanly of the French spoken in his time, though it was proper the Prioress should speak some sort of French. It may however be doubted whether Chaucer did not mean that she could not speak French at all; for it seems that, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the expression " *French* of Stratford at Bow" was a colloquial paraphrase for *English*. In Ferne's " Blazon of Gentrie," published in 1586, page 202, speaking of the Arms of Pressignie, Paradin says, " The bearer heerof, ne none of his name be English: but *bycause it is a French Coate* I will give it you in *French blazonne:* Le Seignior de Pressignie, port de azure et de or, un fasse de 6 pieces partie au pee: au chief pale, contrepale, fesse contrefesse, et deux cantons girons, de les mesmes: sur le toute, ou parmy, un escu d'argent. *But if you would blaze in French of Stratford at Bow*, say that Pressignie beareth barrewaies sixe peces, per pale counterchanged in chief, pale of sixe, par fesse transmuted, or and azure, between two cantons gyrons, of the first and second: over all a scutcheon argent."

Chaucer uses a similar expression in " the Milleres Tale," in his description of Absalon:

> " A mery child he was——
> In twenty manere could he trip and dance
> (*After the scole of Oxenford tho*)
> And with his legges casten to and fro."

Evidently meaning that Absalon had never learnt dancing. Chaucer frequently introduces Proverbs into his Pieces, and it is presumed that the allusion to " the school of

Stratford at Bow," and to the "school of Oxford," were both proverbs before his time; and the former certainly was so in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The following passage in the Prologue to the "Testament of Love" contains Chaucer's opinion on the imperfect manner in which Englishmen spoke French and Frenchmen English:

"In Latin and French hath many soueraine wits had great delyte to endite, and have many noble things fulfilde, but certes there been some that speaken their poisie mater in French, of which spech the French men haue as good a fantasie as we have in hearing of French mens English. And many termes ther ben in English, which unneath we English men connen declare the knowledginge: How should than a French man borne, soche termes conne iumpere in his matter, but as the Jay chatereth English: right so truly the understanding of Englishmen wol not stretch to the priuie termes in Frenche, what so euer wee bosten of straunge langage. Let then Clerkes enditen in Latin, for they haue the propertie of science, and the knowing in that facultie: and lette Frenchmen in their French also enditen their queint termes, for it is kindely to their mouthes, and let us shewe our fantasies in such wordes as wee learneden of our dames tongue."

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Among the "words and phrases not understood," at the end of Tyrwhitt's Glossary, is,

GATTOTHED, which word occurs twice in the Canterbury Tales; first, in the description of the Wife of Bath in the Prologue:

"*Gat-tothed* was she, sothly for to say;"

and again in the account which the Wife of Bath gives of herself:

"*Gat-tothed* I was, and that became me wele."

Tyrwhitt says, "Whether we read thus, with the generality of the MSS.; or *cat-tothed*, with the MSS. Askew, 1, 2; or *gap-tothed*, with ed. Urry, I confess myself equally unable to explain what is meant by this circumstance of description." The word seems sometimes to have been written *gag-tothed;* for Saunders, in his scandalous

account of Anne Boleyn, says, "She was ill-s
ugly; had six fingers; a *gag-tooth*, and a tum
her chin." "*Gap*-toothed" would seem t
teeth which stood at a little distance from e
but the meaning of a "gag-tooth" has not b
tained.

# THE

# ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

MANY menne sain that in sweveninges,
There n'is but fables and lesinges:
But menne may some sweven seene,
Which hardely that false ne been,
But afterward ben apparaunt:
This may I drawe to warraunt
An authour that hight Macrobes,
That halte not dreames false ne lees,
But undoth us the avisioun,
That whilom mette king Cipioun.
And who so sayth, or weneth it be
A jape, or else nicete
To wene that dreames after fall,
Let who so liste a foole me call.
For this trow I, and say for me,
That dreames signifiaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dreamen in hir sleep a nightes
Full many thinges covertly,
That fallen after all openly.
Within my twentie yeere of age,
When that love taketh his courage
Of younge folke, I wente soone
To bed, as I was wont to doone:

And fast I slept, and in sleeping,
Me mette such a swevening,
That liked me wondrous wele,
But in that sweven is never a dele
That it n'is afterward befall,
Right as this dreame woll tell us all.
Now this dreame woll I rime aright,
To make your heartes gay and light:
For love it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so.
And if there any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
How this booke which is here
Shall hatte, that I rede you here:
It is the Romaunt of the Rose,
In which all the art of love I close.
The matter faire is of to make,
God graunt me in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is,
And that is she, that hath ywis
So mokel prise, and thereto she
So worthie is beloved to be,
That she well ought of prise and right,
Be cleped Rose of everie wight.
That it was May me thoughte tho,
It is five yere or more ago,
That it was May, thus dreamed me,
In time of love and jolitie,
That all thing ginneth waxen gay:
For there is neither buske nor hay
In May, that it n'ill shrouded bene,
And it with newe leves wrene:
These woodes eke recoveren grene,
That drie in winter ben to sene,

And the erth waxeth proud withall,
For swote dewes that on it fall,
And the poore estate forget,
In which that winter had it set:
And than become the ground so proude,
That it wol have a newe shroude,
And maketh so queint his robe and faire,
That it had hewes an hundred paire,
Of grasse and floures, of Inde and Pers,
And many hewes full divers:
That is the robe I mean ywis,
Through which the ground to praisen is.
The birdes, that han left hir song,
While they han suffred cold full strong,
In wethers grille, and derke to sight,
Ben in May for the Sunne bright,
So glad, that they shew in singing,
That in hir heart is such liking,
That they mote singen and ben light:
Than doth the nightingale her might,
To maken noyse, and singen blithe:
Than is blisfull many a sithe,
The chelaundre, and the popingaye,
Than younge folke entenden aye,
For to ben gay and amorous,
The time is then so savorous.
Harde is his heart that loveth nought
In May, whan all this mirth is wrought,
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smalle birdes singen clere
Hir blisfull swete song piteous,
And in this season delitous:
When love affirmeth all thing,
Me thought one night, in my sleeping,

Right in my bed full readyly,
That it was by the morrow early,
And up I rose, and gan me cloth,
Anone I wysshe mine hondes both,
A silver needle forth I drow,
Out of an aguiler queint ynow,
And gan this needle thread anone,
For out of towne me list to gone,
The sound of birdes for to heare
That on the buskes singen cleare,
In the swete season that lefe is,
With a thred basting my slevis,
Alone I went in my playing,
The smal foules song hearkening,
That payned hem full many a paire,
To sing on bowes blossomed faire:
Jolife and gay, full of gladnesse,
Toward a river gan I me dresse,
That I heard renne faste by,
For fairer playeng none saw I
Than playen me by that rivere:
For from an hill that stood there nere,
Come downe the stream full stiffe and bold,
Clere was the water, and as cold
As any well is, sooth to saine,
And somedele lasse it was than Saine,
But it was straiter, weleaway,
And never saw I ere that day,
The water that so wele liked me,
And wonder glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that rivere:
And with that water that ran so clere,
My face I wysshe, tho saw I wele,
The bottome ypaved everidele

With gravel, full of stones shene,
The meadowes softe, sote, and grene,
Beet right upon the water side,
Full clere was than the morowe tide,
And full attempre out of drede,
Tho gan I walken thorow the mede,
Downward aye in my playing,
The rivers side coösting.
And when I had a while ygone,
I saw a garden right anone,
Full long and broad, and everidele
Enclosed was, and walled wele,
With hie walles enbatailed,
Portrayed without, and well entayled
With many riche portraitures,
And both the images and peintures,
Can I beholde besely,
And I woll tell you readyly,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As farre as I have remembraunce.
Amidde saw I HATE stonde,
That for her wrath and yre and onde,
Seemed to be a moveresse,
An angry wight, a chideresse,
And ful of gile, and fell courage,
By semblaunt was that ilke image,
And she was nothing wele araide,
But like a wode woman afraide,
Yfrounced foule was her visage,
And grinning for dispitous rage,
Her nose snorted up for tene,
Full hidous was she for to sene,
Full foule and rustie was she this,
Her head ywrithen was ywis

Full grimly with a great towaile.
An image of another entayle,
Alifte halte was her fast by,
Her name above her head saw I,
And she was called Felony.
Another image, that Villany
Ycleped was, saw I and fonde
Upon the wall on her right honde.
Villany was like somedele
That other image, and trusteth wele
She seemed a wicked creature,
By countenaunce in portreiture,
She seemed be full despitous,
And eke full proude and outragious.
Well coud he paint I undertake,
That such an image coude make:
Full foule and chorlych seemed she,
And eke villainous for to be,
And little coulde of norture,
To worship any creature.
And next was painted Covetise,
That eggeth folke in many a gise,
To take and yeve right nought againe,
And great treasoures up to laine.
And that is she, that for usure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more winning,
So covetous is her brenning,
And that is she for pennies fele,
That teacheth for to robbe and stele
These theeves, and these smale harlotes,
And that is routhe, for by hir throtes,
Full many one hongeth at the last:
She maketh folke compasse and cast

To taken other folkes thing,
Through robberie, or miscoveting.
And that is she that maketh treachours,
And she maketh false pleadours,
That with hir termes and hir domes,
Done maidens, children, and eke gromes,
Her heritage to forgo:
Full crooked were her hondes two,
For covetise is ever woode,
To gripen other folkes goode.
Covetise, for her winning,
Full lefe hath other mennes thing.
Another image set saw I,
Nexte Covetise fast by,
And she was cleped AVARICE,
Full foule in painting was that vice,
Full sad and caitife was she eke,
And also grene as any leke,
So evil hewed was her colour,
Her seemed to have lived in langour,
She was like thing for hunger dead,
That lad her life onely by bread
Kneden with eisell strong and egre,
And thereto she was leane and megre,
And she was clad full poorely,
All in an olde torne courtpy,
As she were all with dogges torne,
And both behind and eke beforne
Clouted was she beggerly.
A mantle honge her faste by,
Upon a benche weake and small,
A burnette cote hong there withall,
Furred with no minevere,
But with a furre rough of heere,

Of lambe skinnes heavy and blake,
It was so old I undertake.
For Avarice to cloath her wele,
Ne hasteth her never a dele,
For certainly it were her loth
To wearen of that ilke cloth,
And if it were forweared, she
Woulde have full great nicete
Of clothing, er she bought her newe,
All were it bad of woll and hewe.
This Avarice held in her hand,
A purse that honge by a band,
And that she hid and bond so strong,
Men must abide wonder long,
Out of the purse er ther come aught,
For that ne commeth in her thought,
It was not certaine her entent,
That fro that purse a peny went.
And by that image nigh ynough,
Was peinted Envy, that never lough,
Nor never well in her heart ferde
But if she either saw or herde
Some great mischaunce, or great disease,
Nothing ne may so much her please
As mischeife and misaventure,
Or when she seeth discomfiture
Upon any worthy man fall,
Than liketh her right well withall.
She is full glad in hir courage,
If she see any great linage
Be brought to naught in shamefull wise:
And if a man in honour rise,
Or by his wit, or by his prowesse,
Of that hath she great heavinesse,

For trusteth well she goeth nie wood,
When any chaunce happeth good.
Envy is of such cruelte,
That fayth ne trouth holdeth she,
To friend ne fellow, bad or good.
Ne she hath kinne none of her blood
That she n'is full hir enemie,
She nolde, I dare saine hardely
Her owne father fared wele,
And sore abieth she everie dele
Her malice, and her male talent:
For she is in so great turment
And hate such, when folke doth good,
That nye she melteth for pure wood,
Her hert kerveth and so breaketh
That God the people well awreaketh.
Envy ywis shall never let,
Some blame upon the folke to set.
I trowe that if Envy ywis,
Knew the beste man that is,
On this side or beyond the see,
Yet somewhat lacken him would she:
And if he were so hende and wise,
That she ne might all abate his prise,
Yet would she blame his worthinesse,
Or by her wordes make it lesse.
I sawe Envy in that painting,
Had a wonderfull looking,
For she ne looked but awrie,
Or overwhart, all baggingly.
And she had a foule usage,
She might looke in no visage
Of man ne woman, forth right plaine,
But shette her one eye for disdaine,

So for envie brenned shee
When she might any man see
That faire, or worthy were, or wise,
Or else stood in folkes prise.
  Sorow was painted next Envy
Upon that wall of masonry:
But well was seene in her colour
That she had lived in langour:
Her seemed to have the jaundice,
Not halfe so pale was Avarice,
Ne nothing like of leannesse,
For sorowe, thought, and great distresse,
That she had suffred daie and night,
Made her yellow, and nothing bright:
Full sad, pale, and megre also,
Was never wight yet half so wo
As that her seemed for to be,
Nor so fulfilled with yre as she,
I trow that no wight might her please
Nor doe that thing that might her ease,
Nor she ne would her sorow slake,
Nor comfort none unto her take,
So depe was her wo begonne,
And eke her heart in anger ronne,
A sorowfull thing wel seemed she:
Nor she had nothing slowe be
For to-scratchen all her face
And for to-rent in many place
Her clothes, and for to teare her swire,
As she that was fulfilled of yre,
And all to-torne lay eke her heere
About her shoulders, here and there,
As she that had it all to-rent
For anger and for male talent.

And eke I tell you certainly
How that she wept full tenderly:
In worlde n'is wight so hard of heart
That had seene her sorowes smart
That nolde have had of her pite,
So wo begone a thing was she.
She all to-dasht her selfe for wo
And smote togider her hands two,
To sorrow was she full ententife,
That wofull retchelesse caitife
Her rought little of playing,
Or of clipping or kissing;
For who so sorrowfull is in heart
Him luste not to play ne start,
Nor for to dauncen, ne to sing,
Ne may his heart in temper bring
To make joy on even or morrow,
For joy is contrarie unto sorrow.
Elde was painted after this,
That shorter was a foot ywis
Than she was wont in her yonghede,
Unneth her selfe she might fede,
So feeble and eke so old was she
That faded was all her beaute.
Full salow was waxen her colour,
Her head for hore was white as flour,
Ywis great qualme ne were it none,
Ne sinne, although her life were gone.
All woxen was her body unwelde
And drie and dwined all for elde,
A foule forwelked thing was she
That whilom round and soft had be,
Her heeres shoken fast withall
As from her hedde they woulde fall:

Her face frounced and forpined,
And both her bondes lorne fordwined:
So old she was that she ne went
A foot, but it were by potent.
The time that passeth night and daye,
And restlesse travayleth aye,
And stealeth from us so privyly,
That to us seemeth sikerly
That it in one point dwelleth ever,
And certes it ne resteth never,
But goeth so fast, and passeth aye,
That there n'is man that thinke maye
What time that now present is,
Asketh at these clerkes this,
For menne thinke it readily
Three times been passed by
The time that may not sojourne
But goth, and may never retourne,
As water that down runneth aye
But never droppe returne may:
There may nothing as time endure,
Metall, nor earthly creature,
For all thing it frette and shall,
The time eke that chaungeth all,
And all doth waxe, and fostred be,
And all thing destroyeth he.
The time that eldeth our auncestours
And eldeth kinges and emperours,
And that us all shall overcommen
Er that death us shall have nomen,
The time that hath all in welde
To elden folke, had made her elde
So inly, that to my weting
She might helpe her selfe nothing,

But tourned ayen unto childhede;
She had nothing her selfe to lede
Ne wit ne pithe in her hold
More than a childe of two yere old.
But nathelesse I trow that she
Was faire sometime, and fresh to se,
When she was in her rightfull age:
But she was past all that passage
And was a doted thing becommen:
A furred cappe on had she nomen;
Well had she clad her selfe and warme,
For cold might els doen her harme,
These olde folke have alway cold,
Hir kind is such, when they been old.
Another thing was down there writ,
That seemed like an ipocrite,
And it was cleped Pope holy,
That ilke is she, that privily
Ne spared never a wicked deed,
When men of her taken none heed,
And maketh her outward precious,
With pale visage and piteous,
And seemeth a simple creature,
But ther n'is no misadventure,
That she ne thinketh in her courage:
Full like to her was thilke image,
That maked was like her semblaunce,
She was ful simple of countenaunce.
And she was clothed and eke shod,
As she were for the love of God
Y-olden to religion,
Such seemed her devotion.
A psalter held she fast in hond,
And busily she gan to fond

To make many a faint prayere,
To God, and to his saintes dere:
Ne she was gay, fresh, ne jolife,
But seemed to be full ententife
To goode workes, and to faire,
And thereto she had on an haire.
  Ne certes she was fatte nothing
But seemed werie for fasting,
Of colour pale and dead was she,
From her the gates aie warned be
Of Paradise, that blisfull place,
For such folke maken leane hir grace:
As Christ sayth in his Evangile,
To get hem prise in towne a while,
And for a little glorie vaine,
They lesen God and eke his raigne.
  And alderlast of everichone,
Was painted Povert all alone,
That not a peny had in hold,
Although she her clothes sold,
And though she shuld an honged be,
For naked as a worme was she,
And if the weather stormie were,
For cold she shuld have died there.
  She ne had on but a straite old sacke,
And many a cloute on it there stacke,
This was her cote, and her mantele,
No more was there never a dele
To cloath her with; I undertake,
Great leser hadde she to quake:
And she was put, that I of talke,
Ferre fro these other, up in an halke,
There lurked and there coured she,
For poore thing, where so it be,

Is shamefast, and despised aie:
Accursed may well be that daie,
That poore man conceived is,
For God wote all to seld ywis
Is any poore man well yfed,
Or well arrayed or ycled,
Or well beloved, in such wise,
In honour that he may arise.
All these thinges well avised,
As I have you er this devised,
With gold and azure over all,
Depainted were upon the wall.
Square was the wall, and high somdele
Enclosed, and ybarred wele,
In stead of hedge, was that gardin,
Come never shepherde therein:
Into that gardin, well ywrought,
Who so that me coud have brought,
By ladders or else by degree,
It would well have liked mee,
For such solace, such joy, and pleie,
I trow that never man ne seie,
As was in that place delicious:
The gardin was not daungerous,
To herborow birdes many one,
So rich a yere was never none
Of birdes song, and braunches grene,
Therein were birdes mo I wene,
Than been in all the realme of Fraunce:
Full blisfull was the accordaunce,
Of swete pitous song they made,
For all this worlde it ought glade.
And I my selfe so merry ferde,
Whan I her blisfull songes herde,

That for an hundred pound would I,
If that the passage openly
Had be unto me free
That I couthe entren for to see
Thassemble (God keepe it fro care)
Of birdes, whiche therein ware,
That songen through hir merry throtes,
Daunces of love, and merry notes.
When I thus heard the foules sing,
I fell fast in a waymenting,
By which art, or by what engin,
I might come into that gardin,
But way I couthe finde none,
Into that gardin for to gone,
Ne nought wist I if that there were
Either hole or place where,
By which I might have entre,
Ne there was none to teache me,
For I was all alone ywis,
For woe and anguishe of this,
Till at last bethought I me,
That by no way ne might it be,
That there nas ladder ne way to pace,
Or hole, into so faire a place.
Tho gan I go a full great paas,
Environ, even in compas,
The closing of the square wall,
Till that I found a wicket small
So shette, that I ne might in gone,
And other entre was there none.
Upon this doore I gan to smite
That was so fetis, and so lite,
For other waye coud I not seke.
Full longe I shofe, and knocked eke,

And stode full long all herkening
If that I heard any wight comming:
Till that the doore of thilke entre
A maiden curteis opened me:
Her haire was as yellowe of hewe
As any bason scoured newe,
Her fleshe tender as is a chicke
With bente browes, smooth and slicke,
And by measure large were
The opening of her eyen clere:
Her nose of good proportion,
Her eyen graie, as is a faucon,
With sweete breath and well favoured,
Her face white and well coloured,
With little mouth, and round to see;
A clove chinne eke had she;
Her necke was of good fashion
In length and greatnesse by reason,
Without bleine, scabbe, or roine;
Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoine
Ther n'is a fairer necke ywis
To fele how smooth and soft it is.
Her throte also white of hewe,
As snowe on braunche snowed newe.
Of bodie full well wrought was she,
Men neden not in no countre
A fairer bodie for to seke:
And of fine orfrais had she eke
A chapelet, so semely on,
Ne wered never maide upon;
And faire above that chapelet
A rose garlonde had she set;
She had a gaie mirrour
And with a riche gold tressour,

Her head was tressed queintly
Her sleeves sewed fetously.
And for to keepe her hondes faire
Of gloves white she had a paire:
And she had on a coate of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt, withouten wene:
Well seemed by her apparaile
She was not wont to great travaile.
For whan shee kempt was fetously
And well araied and richly,
Than had she done all her iournee,
For merrye and well begon was she.
She led a lustie life in May,
She had no thought, by night ne day
Of nothing, but if it were onely
To graithe her well and uncouthly.
Whan that this dore had opened me
This maiden, seemely for to see,
I thonked her as I best might,
And asked her how that she hight:
And what she was, I asked eke,
And she to me was nought unmeke
Ne of her answere daungerous,
But faire answerde, and sayed thus:
" Lo sir, my name is Idlenesse
So clepe men me, more and lesse:
Full mightie and full rich am I,
And that of one thinge namely,
For I entende to nothing
But to my joye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse me:
Acquainted am I and prive
With Mirthe, lord of this gardine,
That fro the londe of Alexandrine

Made the trees hither be fet,
That in this gardin been yset:
And when the trees woxen on hight,
This wall that stant here in thy sight,
Did Mirthe enclosen all about,
And these images all without
He did hem both entayle and paint,
That neither been jolife ne queint,
But they been full of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast seene a while ago.

"And oft time him to solace
Sir Mirthe commeth into this place,
And eke with him commeth his meinie,
That liven in lust and jolitie:
And now is Mirthe therein, to here
The birdes how they singen clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And other jolly birdes smale:
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folke, for sweeter place
To playen in, he may not finde,
Although he sought one in tyl Inde.
The alther fairest folke to see
That in this worlde may found bee
Hath Mirthe with him in his rout,
That followen him alwaies about."
When Idlenesse had told all this,
And I had herkened well ywis,
Then saied I to dame Idlenesse,
"Now also wisely God me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so faire and fre,
Is in this yerd with his meinie,
Fro thilke assemble, if I may,

Shall no man werne me to day,
That I this night ne mote it see,
For well wene I there with him bee
A faire and jolie companie
Fulfilled of all courtesie:"
And forth with out wordes mo
In at the wicket went I tho,
That Idlenesse had opened mee,
Into that garden faire to see.
And whan I was in ywis,
Mine herte was full glad of this.
For well wened I full sikerly
Have been in Paradice earthly,
So faire it was, that trusteth well,
It seemed a place espirituell.
For certes at my devise,
There is no place in Paradice,
So good in for to dwell or be,
As in that garden thoughte me.
For there was many a bird singing,
Throughout the yerde all thringing,
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes, finches, and wodwales,
That in hir swete song delighten
In thilke places as they habiten.
There mighte men see many flockes
Of turtles and laverockes,
Chelaundres fele saw I there,
That very nigh forsongen were.
And thrustles, terins, and mavise,
That songen for to win hem prise,
And eke to surmount in hir song
That other birdes hem emong
By note made faire servise:

These birdes, that I you devise,
They song her song as faire and well,
As angels doon espirituell,
And trusteth me, when I hem herde,
Full lustie and well I ferde:
For never yet such melodie
Was heard of man that mighte die.
Such swete song was hem emong,
That me thought it no birdes song,
But it was wonder like to bee
Song of meremaidens of the see,
That for hir singen is so clere:
Though we meremaidens clepe hem here
In English, as is our usaunce,
Men clepe hem sereins in Fraunce.

Ententive weren for to sing
These birdes, that not unkonning
Were of hir craft, and à prentise,
But of songe subtill and wise:
And certes, whan I heard hir song,
And sawe the grene place among,
In heart I wext so wonder gay,
That I was never, ere that day,
So jolife, nor so well bigo,
Ne merry in heart, as I was tho:
And than wist I, and saw full well,
That Idlenesse me served well,
That me put in such jolite,
Her frend well ought I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardin
Had opened, and me let in.
From henceforth, how that I wrought
I shall you tell,—as me thought:

First whereof Mirthe served there,
And eke what folke there with him were,
Without fable I woll discrive,
And that garden eke as blive;
I woll you tellen after this
The faire fashion all ywis,
That well wrought was for the nones;
I may not tell you all atones,
But as I may and can, I shall
By order tellen you it all.
Full faire service, and eke full swete
These birdes maden as they sete:
Laies of love, ful well souning
They songen in hir jargoning,
Some high, and some eke lowe songe
Upon the braunches greene yspronge:
The sweetnesse of hir melodie
Made all mine heart in revelrie.
And whan that I heard I trowe
These birdes singing on a rowe,
Then might I not withholde mee
That I ne went in for to see
Sir Mirthe, for my desiring
Was him to seene over all thing,
His countenaunce and his manere:
That sighte was to me full dere.

Tho went I forth on my right hond
Downe by a litel path I fond
Of mintes full, and fennell greene,
As faste by withouten wene
Sir Mirthe I found, and right anone
Unto sir Mirthe gan I gone,
There as he was him to solace,

And with him in that lustie place,
So faire folke and so fresh had he,
That when I saw, I wondred me
Fro whence suche folke might come,
So faire they weren all and some:
For they weren like, as to my sight,
To angels, that ben fethered bright.
  These folke, of which I tell you so,
Upon a karole wenten tho:
A ladie karoled hem, that hight
Gladnesse, blisfull, and light,
Well could she sing and lustely
None halfe so well and seemely:
And couthe make in song such refraining,
It sate her wonder well to sing.
Her voice full clere was and full swete.
She was not rude ne unmete,
But couthe ynough for such doing
As longeth unto karolling:
For she was wont in every place
To singen first, folke to solace,
For singing most she gave her to,
No craft had she so lefe to do.

Tho mightest thou karoles seene,
And folke daunce and merry beene,
And made many a faire tournyng
Upon the greene grasse springing.
  There mightest thou see these flutours,
Minstrales, and eke jogelours,
That well to singe did hir paine:
Some song songes of Loraine,
For in Loraine hir notes be
Full sweeter than in this countre.

There was many a timbestere,
And sailours, that I dare well swere
Couthe hir craft full perfitly:
The timbres up full subtelly
They cast, and hent full oft
Upon a finger faire and soft,
That they failed never mo.
Full fetis damoseles two,
Right yong, and full of semelyhede
In kirtles, and none other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse
Had Mirthe doen for his noblesse
Amid the carole for to daunce,
But hereof lieth no remembraunce,
How that they daunced queintly:
That one would come all prively
Ayen that other, and when they were
Togither almost, they threw yfere
Hir mouthes so, that through hir play
It seemed as they kist alway:
To dauncen well couthe they the gise.
What should I more to you devise?
Ne bode I never thence go,
Whiles that I saw hem daunce so.
Upon the caroll wonder fast,
I gan beholde, till at last
A ladie gan me for to espie,
And she was cleped COURTESIE,
The worshipfull, the debonaire,
I pray to God ever fall her faire:
Full courtesly she called me,
"What doe ye there, beau sire?" (quod she)
"Come, and if it like you
To dauncen, daunceth with us now:"

And I without tarrying
Went into the carolling,
I was abashed never a dele,
But it to me liked right wele,
That Courtesie me cleped so,
And bade me on the daunce go.
For if I had durst, certaine
I would have carolled right faine
As man that was to daunce right blithe:
Than gan I looken oft sithe
The shape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of all the folke that daunced there,
And I shall tellen what they were.
Full faire was MIRTHE, full long and high,
A fairer man I never sigh:
As round as apple was his face,
Full roddie and white in every place:
Fetis he was and well besey,
With meetly mouth and eyen gray,
His nose by measure wrought full right,
Crispe was his haire, and eke full bright:
His shoulderes of a large brede,
And smallish in the girdlestede:
He seemed like a purtreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So faire, so jolly, and so fetise,
With limmes wrought at point devise
Deliver, smert, and of great might:
Ne saw thou never man so light.
Of berd unneth had he nothing,
For it was in the firste spring,
Full yong he was, and merry of thought
And in samette, with birdes wrought,

And with gold beaten full fetously,
His bodie was clad full richely:
Wrought was his robe in straunge gise,
And all to slittered for queintise
In many a place, low and hie,
And shode he was with great maistrie,
With shoone decoped, and with lace,
By druerie, and by solace,
His lefe a rosen chapelet
Had made, and on his head it set.
And wete ye who was his lefe,
Dame Gladnesse there was him so lefe,
That singeth so well with glad courage,
That from she was twelve yeare of age,
She of her love graunt him made:
Sir Mirthe her by the finger hade
Dauncing, and she him also,
Great love was atwixt hem two:
Both were they faire and bright of hew,
She semed like a rose new
Of colours, and her flesh so tender,
That with a brere small and tender,
Men might it cleve, I dare well say:
Her forhead frounceles all play,
Bent were her browes two,
Her eyen gray, and glad also,
That laughden aye in her semblaunt,
First or the mouth by covenaunt.
I wot not what of her nose I shall discrive
So faire hath no woman alive:
Her haire was yellow, and clere shining,
I wote no lady so liking.
Of orfraies fresh was her garland,
I whiche seene have a thousand

Saw never ywis no garland yet,
So well wrought of silke as it.
And in an over gilt samite
Clad she was, by great delite,
Of whiche her lefe a robe werde,
The merrier she in her heart ferde.
And next her went, on her other side,
The God of Love, that can divide
Love, and as him liketh it be,
But he can chorles daunten, he,
And many folkes pride fallen,
And he can well these lordes thrallen,
And ladies put at low degree
When he may hem too proude see.
This god of love of his fashion
Was like no knave, ne quistron:
His beautie greatly was to prise,
But of his robe to devise
I dreade encombred for to be,
For not yclad in silke was he,
But all in floures and flourettes,
Ypainted all with amorettes,
And with losenges and scochons,
With birdes, liberdes, and lions,
And other beastes wrought full wele;
His garment was every dele
Ypurtraied and ywrought with flours,
By divers medeling of colours:
Floures ther were of many gise
Yset by compasse in a sise,
There lacked no floure to my dome,
Ne not so much as floure of brome,
Ne violet, ne eke pervinke,
Ne floure none, that men can on thinke:

And many a rose lefe full long
Was entermedled there emong:
And also on his head was set
Of roses redde a chapelet.
But nightingales a full great rout
That flien over his head about,
The leaves felden as they flien,
And he was all with birdes wrien,
With popinjay, with nightingale,
With chelaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with larke, and with archangell,
He seemed as he were an angell,
That down were comen fro Heaven clere.
Love had with him a bachelere,
That he made alwayes with him be,
Swete Looking cleped was he:
This batcheler stode beholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes too, full well devised had hee,
That one of hem was of a tree
That beareth a fruict of savour wicke,
Full crooked was that foule sticke,
And knottie here and there also,
And blacke as berrie, or any slo.
That other bow was of a plant
Without wemme, I dare warrant,
Full even and by proportion,
Trectes and long, of full good fashion,
And it was painted well and thwitten,
And over all diapred and written
With ladies and with bacheleres,
Full lightsome and glad of cheres:
These bowes two held Sweet Looking,
That seemed like no gadling:

And ten brode arrowes held he there,
Of which five in his honde were,
But they were shaven well and dight,
Nocked and feathered aright:
And all they were with golde begon,
And stronge pointed everichon,
And sharpe for to kervon wele,
But yron was there none ne stele:
For all was golde, men might see,
Out-take the feathers and the tree.

The swiftest of these arrowes five
Out of a bowe for to drive,
And beste feathered for to flie,
And fairest eke, was cleped Beautie:
That other arrow that hurteth lesse,
Was cleped (as I trow) Simplesse:
The thirde cleped was Fraunchise,
That feathered was in noble wise
With valour and with courtesie?
The fourth was clepen Companie,
That heavie for to shooten is,
But who so shooteth right ywis,
May therewith doen great harme and wo:
The fift of these, and last also,
Faire Semblaunt men that arrow call,
The leste greevous of hem all,
Yet can it make a full great wound,
But he may hope his sores sound
That hurt is with that arrowe ywis,
His wo the bette bestowed is:
For he may sooner have gladnesse,
His langour ought to be the lesse.

Five arrowes were of other gise,

That been full foule to devise:
For shaft and end, sooth for to tell,
Were al so blacke as fiend in Hell.
The first of hem is called Pride,
That other arrow next him beside,
It was cleped Villanie,
That arrow was with fellonie
Envenimed, and with spitous blame:
The third of hem was cleped Shame.
The fourth, Wanhope cleped is,
The fift, the Newe Thought ywis.
These arrowes that I speake of here,
Were all five on one mannere,
And all were they resemblable;
To hem was well fitting and able,
The foule crooked bowe hidous,
That knottie was, and all roinous;
That bowe seemed well to shete
The arrowes five, that been unmete
And contrary to that other five:
But though I tell not as blive
Of hir power, ne of hir might,
Hereafter shall I tellen right
The sooth, and eke signifiaunce,
As ferre as I have remembraunce:
All shall be saied I undertake,
Ere of this booke an end I make.
Now come I to my tale againe:
But alderfirst, I woll you saine
The fashion and the countenaunces
Of all the folke that on the daunce is.
The god of love jolife and light,
Led on his honde a ladie bright,
Of high prise, and of great degre,

This ladie called was Beaute,
And an arrow, of which I told,
Full well thewed was she hold:
Ne she was derke ne browne, but bright,
And cleare as the moone light:
Againe whom all the starres semen
But small candles, as we demen:
Her flesh was tender as dewe of floure,
Her cheare was simple as bird in boure,
As white as lilly or rose in rise:
Her face gentill and tretise:
Fetis she was, and small to see,
No wintred browes had shee,
Ne popped haire, for it needed nought
To winder her, or to paint her ought:
Her tresses yellow, and long straughten,
Unto her heeles downe they raughten:
Her nose, her mouth, and eye and cheke
Well wrought, and all the remnaunt eke.
A full gret savour and a swote;
Me thoughte in mine herte rote,
As helpe me God, when I remember,
Of the fashion of every member,
In world is none so faire a wight:
For yong she was, and hewed bright
Sore pleasant, and fetis with all,
Gent, and in her middle small.
Beside Beaute yede Richesse,
An high ladie of great noblesse,
And great of price in every place:
But who so durst to her trespace
Or till her folke, in werke or dede,
He were full hardie out of drede:
For both she helpe and hinder may,

And that is not of yesterday
That riche folke have full great might
To helpe, and eke to greve a wight.
  The best and greatest of valour
Didden Richesse full great honour,
And busie weren her to serve,
For that they would her love deserve;
They cleped her ladie, gret and small,
This wide world her dredeth all:
This world is all in her daungere,
Her court hath many a losengere,
And many a traitour envious,
That ben full busie and curious
For to dispraise, and to blame
That best deserven love and name,
To forne the folke hem to begilen,
These losengeours hem preise and smilen.
  And thus the world with word annointen,
But afterward they prill and pointen
The folke, right to the bare bone,
Behinde hir backe when they ben gone,
And foule abaten folkes prise.
Full many a worthy man and wise
Han hindred, and ydon to die
These losengeours with hir flatterie,
And maketh folke full straunge be,
There as hem ought ben prive:
Well evill mote they thrive and thee,
And evill arived mote they bee
These losengeours full of envie.
No good man loveth hir companie.
  Richesse a robe of purple on had,
Ne trow not that I lie or mad:
For in this world is none it liche,

Ne by a thousand deale so riche,
Ne none so faire, for it full wele,
With orfreis laied was every dele,
And purtraid in the ribanings
Of dukes stories, and of kings,
And with a bend of gold tassiled,
And knopes fine of gold amiled:
About her necke of gentle entayle
Was shet the riche chevesaile,
In which there was full great plente
Of stones clere, and faire to se.
Richesse a girdle had upon,
The bokell of it was of ston,
Of vertue great, and mokell of might:
For who so bare the stone so bright,
Of venim durst him nothing doubt
While he the stone had him about:
That stone was greatly for to love,
And till a riche mannes behove
Worth all the gold in Rome and Frise:
The mourdant wrought in noble gise
Was of a stone full precious,
That was so fine and vertuous,
That whole a man it couth make
Of palsie, and of tothe ake,
And yet the stone had such a grace,
That he was seker in every place
All thilke day not blind to beene,
That fasting might that stone seene:
The barres were of gold full fine,
Upon a tissue of sattine
Full heavie, great, and nothing light,
In everiche was a besaunt wight.
Upon the tresses of richesse

Was set a circle of noblesse
Of brende golde, that full light shone,
So faire trow I was never none:
But he were cunning for the nones,
That could devise all the stones
That in that circle shewen clere,
It is a wonder thing to here:
For no man could preise or gesse
Of hem the value or richesse:
Rubies there were, saphirs, ragounces,
And emeraudes, more than two unces.
But all before full subtilly
A fine carbuncle set saw I,
The stone so cleare was and so bright,
That all so soone as it was night,
Menne might seene to go for nede
A mile or two, in length and brede.
Such light ysprang out of the stone,
That Richesse wonder bright yshone
Bothe her hedde, and all her face,
And eke about her all the place.
Dame Richesse on her hond gan led
A yong man full of semelyhede,
That she best loved of any thing,
His lust was much in housholding:
In clothing was he full fetise,
And loved well to have hors of prise,
He wend to have reproved be
Of theft or murder, if that he
Had in his stable an hacknay,
And therefore he desired aye
To been acquainted with Richesse,
For all his purpose, as I gesse,
Was for to maken great dispence,

Withouten warning or defence:
And Richesse might it well sustaine,
And her dispences wele maintaine,
And him alway such plentie send
Of gold and silver for to spend
Withouten lacking or daungere,
As it were pourde in a garnere.
And after on the daunce went
Largesse, that set all her entent
For to ben honorable and free,
Of Alexanders kinne was shee:
Her moste joie was ywis,
When that she yafe, and saied, have this.
Not avarice the foule caitife
Was halfe to gripe so ententife
As Largesse is, to yeve and spend,
And God alway ynowe her send,
So that the more she yave away,
The more ywis she had alway.
Great loos hath Largesse, and great prise,
For both wise folke and unwise
Were wholly to her bandon brought,
So well with yeftes hath she wrought.
And if she had an enemy,
I trowe that she couth craftely
Make him full soone her friend to be,
So large of yeftes, and wise was she,
Therefore she stood in love and grace
Of rich and poore in every place.
A full great foole he is ywis,
That both rich and poore, and niggard is.
A lord may have no manner vice,
That greeveth more than avarice.
For niggard never with strength of hand

May win him great lordship or land:
For friendes all too few hath he
To doen his will performed be:
And who so woll have friendes here,
He may not hold his treasure dere.
For by ensample tell I this,
Right as an adamant ywis
Can drawen to him subtelly
The yron that is laied thereby,
So draweth folkes hearts ywis
Silver and gold that yeven is.
Largesse had on a robe fresh
Of riche purpure sarlinish:
Well formed was her face and clere,
And opened had she her colere,
For she right there had in present
Unto a lady made present
Of a gold broche, full well wrought,
And certes it mis-sate her nought:
For through her smocke wrought with silke,
The flesh was seene as white as milke:
Largesse, that worthy was and wise,
Held by the hond a knight of prise,
Was sibbe to Arthour of Breteigne,
And that was he that bare the enseigne
Of worship, and the gosfaucoun:
And yet he is of such renoun,
That menne of him say faire things
Before barons, earles, and kings.
This knight was commen all newly
Fro tourneying faste by,
There had he done great chivalrie
Through his vertue and his maistrie,
And for the love of his lemman

He cast downe many a doughty man.
And next him daunced dame Fraunchise,
Arrayed in full noble gise:
She nas not broune ne dunne of hew,
But white as snow yfallen new:
Her nose was wrought at point devise,
For it was gentill and tretise,
With eyen glad, and browes bent,
Her haire downe to her heles went,
And she was simple as dove on tree,
Full debonaire of hert was shee.
She durste neither say ne do,
But that, that her longeth to:
And if a man were in distresse,
And for her love in heavinesse,
Her herte would have full great pitee
She was so amiable and free:
For were a manne for her bestad,
She woulde ben right sore adrad,
That she did overgreat outrage,
But she him hope his harme t'aswage,
Her thought it all a villany,
And she had on a suckeny,
That not of hempe herdes was,
So faire was none in all Arras,
Lord, it was riddled fetisly,
There nas not a point truely
That it nas in his right assise,
Full well yclothed was Fraunchise,
For there n'is no cloth sitteth bette
On damosell, than doth rokette:
A woman well more fetise is
In rokette, than in cote ywis,
The white rokette riddeled faire,

Betokeneth, that full debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.
  By her daunced a bachelere,
I cannot tellen what he hight,
But faire he was, and of good height,
All had he ben, I say no more,
The lordes sonne of Windesore.
  And next that daunced Courtesie,
That preised was of low and hie,
For neither proud ne foole was she:
She for to daunce called me,
I praie God give her good grace,
For when I came first into the place,
She nas not nice, ne outrageous,
But wise and ware, and vertuous,
Of faire speech, and faire answer,
Was never wight missaid of her:
She bare no rancour to no wight,
Clere browne she was, and thereto brig[illegible]
Of face and body avenaunt
I wote no lady so pleasaunt,
She weren worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned quene.
  And by her went a knight dauncing
That worthy was and well speaking,
And full well coud he done honour:
The knight was faire and stiffe in stour,
And in armure a seemely man,
And well beloved of his lemman.
  Faire Idlenesse then saw I,
That alway was me faste by,
Of her have I withouten faile
Told you the shape and apparaile:
For (as I said) Lo, that was she

That did to me so great bounte.
She the gate of that gardin
Undid, and let me passen in,
And after daunced as I gesse.
And she fulfilled of lustinesse,
That n'as not yet twelve yeare of age,
With herte wild, and thought volage.
Nice she was, but she ne ment
None harme ne sleight in her entent,
But onely lust and jolite.
For yonge folke, well weten ye,
Have little thought but on hir play.
Her lemman was beside alway,
In such a gise, that he her kist
At all times that him list,
That all the daunce might it see,
They make no force of privetee:
For who so spake of hem evill or wele,
They were ashamed never adele,
But men might seene hem kisse there,
As it two yonge doves were,
For yonge was thilke bachelere,
Of beauty wot I non his pere,
And he was right of such an age,
As youth his lefe, and such courage.
The lusty folke that daunced there,
And also other that with hem were
That weren all of hir meinee
Full hende folke, wise, and free,
And folke of faire port truly,
There were all comenly.
Whan I had seene the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces,
Than had I will to go and see

The garden that so liked mee,
And loken on these faire laureres,
Or pine trees, cedres, and ormeres,
The daunces than al ended were,
For many of hem that daunced there,
Were with her loves went away
Under the trees to have her play.

A LORD, they lived lustely,
A great foole were he sikerly,
That n'old his thankes such life lede:
For this dare I saine out of drede,
That who so mighte so well fare,
For better life durst him not care,
For there n'is so good paradise,
As to have a love at his devise:
Out of that place went I tho,
And in that garden gan I go,
Playing along full merely.
The god of love full hastely
Unto him SWEET-LOOKING clept,
No lenger would he that she kept
His bowe of gold, that shone so bright.
He had him bent anon right,
And he full soone set an end,
And at a braide he gan it bend,
And tooke him of his arrowes five,
Full sharpe and ready for to drive.
Now God that sitteth in majeste
Fro deadly woundes he keepe me,
If so be that he had me shete,
For if I with his arrow mete,
It had me greeved sore ywis,
But I, that nothing wist of this,

Went up and downe full many a way,
And he me followed fast alway,
But no where would I reste me,
Till I had in all the garden be.

The garden was by measuring
Right even and square in compassing,
It as long was as it was large,
Of fruit had every tree his charge,
But it were any hidous tree
Of whiche there were two or three.
There were, and that wote I full wele,
Of pomgranettes a full great dele,
That is a fruit full well to like,
Namely to folke when they ben sike:
And trees there were great foison,
That baren nuts in hir season,
Such as menne nutmegges call,
That swote of savour been withall,
And almandres great plentee,
Figges, and many a date tree
There weren, if menne had nede,
Through the gardin in length and brede.
There was eke wexing many a spice,
As clowe, gilofre, and licorice,
Gingere, and grein de Paris,
Canell, and setewale of pris,
And many a spice delitable,
To eaten when men rise fro table.
And many homely trees there were,
That peaches, coines, and apples bere,
Medlers, plummes, peeres, chesteinis,
Cherise, of whiche many one faine is,
Notes, aleis, and bolas,

That for to seene it was solas,
With many high laurer and pine,
Was renged clene all that gardine,
With cipres, and with oliveris,
Of which that nigh no plenty here is.
There were elmes great and strong,
Maples, ashe, oke, aspes, planes long,
Fine ewe, popler, and lindes faire,
And other trees full many a paire.
What should I tell you more of it?
There were so many trees yet,
That I should all encombred bee,
Ere I had reckoned every tree.
These trees were set that I devise,
One from another in assise
Five fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
But they were high and great also:
And for to keepe out well the Sunne,
The croppes were so thicke yrunne,
And every braunch in other knitte,
And full of greene leaves sitte,
That Sunne might there none descend,
Least the tender grasses shend.
There might menne does and roes ysee,
And of squirrels full great plentee,
From bough to bough alway leping,
Connies there were also playing,
That comen out of hir clapers
Of sundry colours and maners,
And maden many a tourneying
Upon the freshe grasse springing.
In places saw I welles there,
In whiche there no frogges were,
And faire in shaddow was every well;

But I ne can the number tell
Of stremis small, that by devise
Mirthe had done come through condise,
Of which the water in renning
Gan make a noise full liking.
About the brinkes of these wels,
And by the streames over all els
Sprang up the grasse, as thicke yset
And softe as any velvet.
On which men might his lemman ley,
As on a featherbed to pley,
For the earth was full soft and swete:
Through moisture of the well wete
Sprong up the sote grene gras,
As faire, as thicke, as mister was.
But much amended it the place,
That thearth was of such a grace
That it of floures hath plente,
That both in summer and winter be.
There sprang the violet all new,
And freshe pervinke rich of hew,
And floures yellow, white, and rede,
Such plenty grew there never in mede:
Full gay was all the ground and queint,
And poudred, as men had it peint,
With many a fresh and sundry flour,
That casten up full good savour.
I woll nat long hold you in fable
Of all this garden delectable,
I mote my tongue stinten nede,
For I ne may withouten drede
Naught tellen you the beautie all,
Ne halfe the bountie therewithall.
I went on right honde and on left

About the place, it was not left
Till I had all the garden beene
In the esters that men might seene.
And thus while I went in my playe,
The god of love me followed aye.
Right as an hunter can abide
The beast, till he seeth his tide
To shooten at goodnesse to the deere,
Whan that him needeth go no neere.
And so befell, I rested mee
Besides a well under a tree,
Which tree in Fraunce men call a pine,
But sith the time of king Pepine
Ne grew there tree in mannes sight
So faire, ne so well woxe in hight,
In all that yard so high was none.
And springing in a marble stone
Had nature set, the sooth to tell,
Under that pine tree a well,
And on the border all without
Was written on the stone about
Letters small, that saiden thus,
*Here starfe the faire Narcissus.*
Narcissus was a bachelere,
That Love had caught in his daungere
And in his nette gan him so straine,
And did him so to weepe and plaine,
That need him must his life forgo:
For a faire lady, that hight Echo,
Him loved over any creature,
And gan for him such paine endure,
That on a time she him tolde,
That if he her loven nolde,
That her behoved needes die,

There lay none other remedie.
But nathelesse, for his beaute
So fierce and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunten her asking,
For weeping, ne for faire praying.
And when she heard him werne her so,
She had in herte so grete wo,
And tooke it in so grete despite,
That she without more respite
Was dead anon: but ere she deide,
Ful pitously to God she preide,
That proude hearted Narcissus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Might on a day ben hampered so
For love, and ben so hote for wo,
That never he might to joy attaine;
Then should he felé in very vaine
What sorrow true lovers maken,
That ben so villainously forsaken.

This prayer was but reasonable,
Therefore God held it firme and stable:
For Narcissus shortly to tell,
By aventure came to that well
To rest him in the shaddowing
A day, when he came from hunting.
This Narcissus had suffred paines
For renning all day in the plaines,
And was for thurst in great distresse
Of herte, and of his wearinesse,
That had his breath almost benomen.
Whan he was to that well ycomen,
That shaddowed was with braunches grene,
He thought of thilke water shene

To drinke and fresh him wele withall,
And downe on knees he gan to fall,
And forth his necke and head outstraught
To drinke of that well a draught:
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouth, his eyen shene,
And he thereof was all abashed,
His owne shaddow had him betrashed,
For well wend he the forme see
Of a childe of great beautee,
Well couth Love him wreke tho
Of daungere and of pride also
That Narcissus sometime him bere,
He quite him well his guerdon there,
For he mused so in the well,
That shortely the sooth to tell,
He loved his owne shaddow so,
That at last he starfe for wo:
For when he saw that he his will
Might in no manner way fulfill,
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comfort naught,
He lost his wit right in that place
And died within a little space,
And thus his warison he tooke
For the lady that he forsoke.
Ladies I praye ensample taketh,
Ye that ayenst your love mistaketh:
For if of hir death be you to wite,
God can full well your wile quite.
When that this letter of which I tell,
Had taught me that it was the well
Of Narcissus in his beaute,
I gan anon withdrawe me,

When it fell in my remembraunce,
That him betide such mischaunce:
But at the laste than thought I,
That scatheless, full sikerly,
I might unto the welle go,
Whereof shull I abashen so.
Unto the welle then went I mee,
And downe I louted for to see
The clere water in the stone,
And eke the gravell, which that shone
Downe in the bottome, as silver fine:
For of the well, this is the fine,
In world is none so clere of hew,
The water is ever fresh and new
That welmeth up with waves bright
The mountenaunce of two finger hight:
About it is grasse springing,
For moist so thicke and well liking,
That it ne may in winter die,
No more than may the see be drie.

Downe at the bottome set saw I
Two christal stones craftely
In thilke fresh and faire well:
But o thing soothly dare I tell,
That ye woll hold a great mervaile
Whan it is told withouten faile:
For whan the Sunne clere in sight
Cast in that well his beames bright,
And that the heat descended is,
Than taketh the christall stone ywis,
Againe the Sunne an hundred hewis,
Blew, yellow, and red, that fresh and new is:
Yet hath the mervailous christall

Such strength, that the place over all,
Both foule and tree, and leaves greene,
And all the yerd in it is seene:
And for to done you to understond,
To make ensample woll I fond:
Right as a mirrour openly
Sheweth all thing that stondeth thereby,
As well the colour as the figure,
Withouten any coverture:
Right so the christall stone shining,
Withouten any deceiving,
The entrees of the yerd accuseth
To him that in the water museth:
For ever in which halfe ye bee,
Ye may well halfe the garden see:
And if he turne, he may right wele
Seene the remenaunt every dele:
For there is none so little thing
So hid ne closed with shytting,
That it ne is seene, as though it were
Painted in the chrystall there.
This is the mirrour perillus,
In which the proude Narcissus
Sey all his faire face bright,
That made him sith to lie upright:
For who so looke in that mirrour,
There may nothing ben his succour
That he ne shall there see something
That shall him lede into laughing:
Full many a worthy man hath it
Yblent, for folke of greatest wit
Ben soone caught here and waited,
Withouten respite ben they baited:
Here commeth to folke of new rage,

Here chaungeth many wight courage,
Here lithe no rede ne wit thereto,
For Venus sonne, dan Cupido,
Hath sowen there of love the sede,
That helpe ne lithe there none, ne rede,
So cercleth it the well about:
His ginnes hath he set without
Right for to catch in his panters
These damosels and bachelers.
Love will none other birde catch,
Though he set either nette or latch:
And for the seed that here was sowen,
This well is cleped, as well is knowen,
The Well of Love, of very right,
Of which there hath full many wight
Spoken in bookes diversly:
But they shull never so verily
Description of the well here,
Ne eke the sooth of this matere,
As ye shull, when I have undo
The craft that her belongeth to.

Alway me liked for to dwell,
To seene the christall in the well,
That shewed me full openly
A thousand thinges faste by,
But I may say in sorry houre
Stode I to looken or to poure:
For sithen I sore siked,
That mirrour hath me now entriked:
But had I first knowen in my wit
The vertue and strengthes of it,
I n'old not have mused there,
Me had bette ben eleswhere,

For in the snare I fell anone,
That had bitreshed many one.
In thilke mirrour saw I tho,
Among a thousand things mo,
A roser charged full of rosis,
That with an hedge about enclosis,
Tho had I suche luste and envie,
That for Paris ne for Pavie,
N'old I have left to gone and see,
There greatest heape of roses bee.
Whan I was with that rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go,
And whan I was not ferre therefro,
The savour of the roses swote
Me smote right to the heart rote,
As I had all enbaumed be:
And if I ne had endoutet me
To have ben hated or assailed,
My thankes woll I not have failed
To pull a rose of all that rout
To beare in mine honde about,
And smellen to it where I went,
But ever I drede me to repent,
And least it greved or forthought
The lord that thilke gardin wrought.
Of roses there were great wone,
So faire were never in Rone:
Of knoppes close, some saw I there,
And some well better woxen were,
And some there been of other moison,
That drowe nigh to hir season,
And sped hem faste for to spred,
I love well such roses red:

For brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two,
But knoppes will fresh bee
Two dayes at least, or els three.
The knoppes greatly liked mee,
For fairer may there no man see:
Who so might have one of all,
It ought him been full lefe withall:
Might I garlonde of hem getten,
For no richesse I would it letten.
Amongs the knoppes I chese one
So faire, that of the remnaunt none
Ne preise I halfe so well as it,
Whan I avise in my wit,
For it so well was enlumined
With colour red, as well fined
As nature couth it make faire,
And it hath leaves well foure paire,
That Kinde hath set through his knowing
About the red roses springing,
The stalke was as rishe right,
And thereon stood the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no side,
The swote smell sprung so wide,
That it died all the place about.
Whan I had smelled the savour swote,
No will had I fro thence yet go,
But somedele nere it went I tho
To take it, but mine hond for drede
Ne durst I to the rose bede,
For thistles sharpe of many manners,
Nettles, thornes, and hooked briers,
For muche they distourbled me,
For sore I drad to harmed be.

The god of love, with bowe bent,
That all day set had his talent
To pursue and to spien mee,
Was stonding by a figge tree,
And when he sawe how that I
Had chosen so ententifely
The bothum more unto my pey,
Than any other that I sey:
He tooke an arrow full sharpely whet,
And in his bowe when it was set,
He streight up to his eare drough
The strong bowe, that was so tough,
And shot at me so wonder smert,
That through mine eye unto mine hert
The takell smote, and deepe it went:
And therewithall such cold me hent,
That under clothes warme and soft,
Sithen that day I have chivered oft.
When I was hurte thus in stound,
I fell down plat unto the ground,
Mine herte failed and fainted aye,
And long time in swoune I lay:
But when I came out of swouning,
And had my wit, and my feeling.
I was all mate, and wend full wele
Of blood, have lorne a full great dele,
But certes the arrow that in me stood,
Of me ne drew no drop of blood,
For why I found my wounds all drey.
Than tooke I with mine hondes twey
The arrow, and full fast it out plight,
And in the pulling sore I sight,
So at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the feathers three,

But yet the hooked head ywis,
The whiche Beauty called is,
Gan so deepe in mine herte pace,
That I it might not arace,
But in mine herte still it stood,
All bled I not a drop of blood:
I was both anguishous and trouble,
For the perill that I saw double,
I nist what to say or do,
Ne get a leach my wounds to,
For neither through grasse ne rote,
Ne had I helpe of hope ne bote.
But to the bothum evermo
Mine herte drew, for all my wo,
My thought was in none other thing,
For had it been in my keeping,
It would have brought my life againe,
For certes evenly, I dare well saine,
The sight only, and the savour,
Alegged much of my langour.
Than gan I for to drawe mee
Toward the bothum faire to see,
And Love had gette him in his throwe
Another arrowe into his bowe,
And for to shote gan him dresse,
The arrowes name was Simplesse,
And when that love gan nigh me nere,
He drowe it up withouten were,
And shot at me with all his might,
So that this arrow anon right
Throughout eigh as it was found,
Into mine herte hath made a wound.
Than I anon did all my craft
For to drawen out the shaft,

And therwithall I sighed eft,
But in mine herte the head was left,
Which aye increased my desire;
Unto the bothum drow I nere,
And evermo that me was wo
The more desire had I to go
Unto the roser, where that grew
The fresh bothum so bright of hew,
Better me were to have letten be,
But it behoved nede me
To doen right as mine herte bad:
For ever the body must be lad
After the herte, in wele and wo,
Of force together they must go.
But never this archer would fine
To shote at me with all his pine,
And for to make me to him mete.
The third arrow he gan to shete,
Whan best his time he might espie,
The which was named Courtesie,
Into mine herte he did avale,
A swoune I fell, both dead and pale,
Long time I lay, and stirred nought,
Till I abraied out of my thought.
And faste than I avised mee
To drawe out the shaft of tree,
But ever the head was left behind
For ought I couthe pull or wind,
So sore it sticked when I was hit,
That by no craft I might it flit,
But anguishous and full of thought,
I felt such wo, my wound aye wrought,
That summoned me alway to go
Toward the rose, that pleased me so,

But I ne durst in no manere
Because the archer was so nere.
For evermore gladly as I rede,
Brent child of fire hath much drede.
And certes yet for all my pein,
Though that I sigh, yet arrowes rein,
And ground quarells sharpe of stele,
Ne for no paine that I might fele,
Yet might I not my selfe withhold
The faire roser to behold,
For Love me yave such hardement
For to fulfill his commaundement,
Upon my feet I rose up than
Feeble, as a forwounded man:
And forth to gone my might I set,
And for the archer nold I let,
Toward the roser fast I drowe
But thornes sharpe, mo than ynowe
There were, and also thistles thicke,
And breres brimme for to pricke,
That I ne might get grace
The rough thornes for to pace
To seene the roses fresh of hew,
I must abide, though it me rew,
The hedge about so thicke was,
That closed the roses in compas.
But o thing liked me right wele,
I was so nigh, I might fele
Of the bothum the swote odour,
And also see the fresh colour,
And that right greatly liked mee,
That I so nere might it see,
Such joy anon thereof had I,
That I forgat my malady,

To seene I had such delite,
Of sorrow and anger I was all quite,
And of my wounds that I had thore,
For nothing liken me might more,
Than dwellen by the roser aye,
And thence never to passe awaye:
But whan a while I had be thare,
The god of love, which all to share
Mine heart with his arrowes kene,
Casteth him to yeve me woundes grene,
He shot at me full hastely
An arrow named Company,
The whiche takell is full able
To make these ladies merciable,
Than I anone gan chaungen hew
For greevaunce of my wounde new,
That I againe fell in swouning,
And sighed sore in complaining.
Sore I complained that my sore
On me gan greven more and more,
I had none hope of allegiaunce,
So nigh I drow to disperaunce,
I rought of death, ne of life,
Whether that love would me drife,
If me a martir would he make,
I might his power not forsake:
And while for anger thus I woke,
The god of love an arrow toke,
Full sharpe it was and pugnaunt,
And it was called Faire Semblaunt,
The which in no wise would consent,
That any lover him repent
To serve his love with herte and all,
For any perill that may befall.

But thought his arrow was kene ground,
As any rasour that is found,
To cut and kerve at the point,
The god of love it had annoint
With a precious oyntment,
Somedele to yeve allegement
Upon the woundes that he hade
Through the body in my heart made,
To helpe hir sores, and to cure,
And that they may the bette endure:
But yet this arrow, without more,
Made in mine heart a large sore,
That in full greate paine I abode,
But aye the ointment went abrode
Throughout my woundes large and wide,
It sprede about in every side:
Through whose vertue and whose might,
Mine herte joyfull was and light.
I had ben dead and all to shent
But for the precious ointment:
The shaft I drow out of the arrow,
Roking for wo right wonder narrow,
But the head, which made me smart,
Left behinde in mine heart
With other fower, I dare well say,
That never woll be take away,
But the ointment halpe me wele,
And yet such sorrow did I fele,
That all day I chaunged hew,
Of my woundes fresh and new,
As men might see in my visage,
The arrowes were so full of rage,
So variaunt of diversitee,
That men in everiche might see

Both great annoy and eke sweetnesse,
And joy meint with bitternesse:
Now were they easie, now were they wood,
In hem I felt both harme and good,
Now sore without alleggement,
Now softing with the ointement,
It softened here, and priked there,
Thus ease and anger together were.

The god of love deliverly
Come lepande to me hastely,
And saied to me in great jape,
" Yeeld thee, for thou may not escape,
May no defence availe thee here:
Therefore I rede make no daungere.
If thou wold yeeld thee hastely,
Thou shalt rather have mercy:
He is a foole in sikernesse,
That with daunger or stoutnesse
Rebelleth there that he should please,
In such folly is little ease.
Be meeke, where thou must needes bowe,
To strive ayen is not thy prowe:
Come at ones, and have ido,
For I woll that it be so,
Then yeeld thee here debonairly."
And I answered full humbly,
" Gladly sir, at your bidding,
I woll me yeeld in all thing:
To your service I woll me take,
For God defend that I should make
Ayen your bidding resistence.
I woll not doen so great offence,
For if I did, it were no skill,

Ye may do with me what ye will,
Save or spill, and also slo,
Fro you in no wise may I go,
My life, my death, is in your hond,
I may not last out of your bond,
Plaine at your list I yeeld me,
Hoping in heart, that sometime ye
Comfort and ese shull me send:
Or els shortly, this is the end,
Withouten health I mote aye dure,
But if ye take me to your cure:
Comfort or health, how should I have,
Sith ye me hurt, but ye me save?
The health of love mote be found,
Whereas they token first hir wound:
And if ye list of me to make
Your prisoner, I woll it take
Of heart and willfully at gree,
Holy and plaine I yeeld mee
Without feining or feintise,
To be governed by your emprise:
Of you I heare so much prise,
I woll been whole at your devise
For to fulfill your liking
And repent for nothing,
Hoping to have yet in some tide
Mercy, of that I abide:"
And with that covenaunt yeeld I mee,
Anon downe kneeling upon my knee,
Profering for to kisse his fete,
But for nothing he would me lete.
And said, " I love thee both and preise,
Sens that thine answere doth me ese:
For thou answered so curtesly,

For now I wote well utterly,
That thou art gentle by thy speech:
For though a man ferre would seech,
He shuld not finden in certaine,
No such answere of no villaine:
For such a worde ne might nought
Issue out of a villaines thought.
Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche,
For thy helping woll I eche,
And eke encreasen that I may:
But first I woll that thou obay
Fully for thine avauntage
Anone to doe me here homage:
And sithe kisse thou shalt my mouth,
Which to no villaine was never couth
For to approch it, ne for to touch,
For saufe of cherles I ne vouch
That they shall never neigh it nere;
For curteis, and of faire manere,
Well taught, and full of gentlenesse
He must be, that shall me kisse,
And also of full high fraunchise,
That shall attaine to that emprise.
" And first of o thing warne I thee,
That paine and great adversitee
He mote endure, and eke travaile
That shall me serve, without faile,
But there againe thee to comfort,
And with thy service to disport,
Thou maiest full glad and joyfull bee
So good a maister to have as mee,
And lord of so high renoune,
I beare of Love the gonfenoune,
Of curtesie the banere,

For I am of the selfe manere,
Gentle, courteous, meeke and free,
That who ever ententive bee
Me to honour, doute, and serve,
And also that he him observe
Fro trespasse and fro villanie,
And him governe in courtesie,
With will and entention;
For when he first in my prison
Is caught, then must he utterly,
Fro thenceforth full busily,
Cast him gentle for to be,
If he desire helpe of me."
Anon without more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I become his man anone,
And gave him thankes many a one,
And kneled doune with hondes joint,
And made it in my port full queint:
The joy went to my herte rote,
Whan I had kissed his mouth so swote,
I had such mirth and such liking,
It cured me of languishing.
He asked of me than hostages,
" I have," he sayd, " taken fele homages
Of one and other, where I have bene,
Distreined oft, withouten wene,
These felons full of falsite,
Have many sithes beguiled me,
And through hir falshed hir lust atchieved,
Whereof I repent and am agreeved,
And I hem get in my daungere,
Hir falshed shall they bie full dere,
But for I love thee, I say thee plaine,

I woll of thee be more certaine,
For thee sore I woll now binde,
That thou away ne shalt not winde,
For to denien thy covenaunt,
Or done that is not avenaunt,
That thou were false, it were great ruth,
Sith thou seemest so ful of truth."
" Sir, if thee list to understand,
I marvaile thee asking this demaund,
For why or wherefore should ye,
Hostages or borowes aske of me,
Or any other sikernesse,
Sith ye wote in sothfastnesse,
That ye me have surprised so,
And hold mine heart, taken me fro,
That it woll doe for me nothing,
But if it be at your bidding,
Mine herte is yours, and mine right nou
As it behoveth, in deede and thought,
Ready in all to worke your will,
Whether so tourne to good or ill,
So sure it lusteth you to plese,
No man thereof may you disese,
Ye have thereon set such justise,
That it is werried in many wise,
And if ye doubt it n'old obaie,
Ye may thereof do make a kaie,
And hold it with you for hostage."
" Now certes this is none outrage,"
(Quoth Love) " and fully I accord,
For of the bodie he is full lord
That hath the heart in his treasore,
Outrage it were to asken more."

Than of his aumener he drough,
A little key fetise inough,
Which was of gold polished clere
And sayed to me, " With this keye here,
Thine herte to me now woll I shet,
For all my jowel loke and knet,
I binde under this little kay,
That no wight may carie away."
This key is full of great poste,
With which anone he touched me,
Under the side full softely,
That he mine herte sodainely,
Without annoy had speered,
That yet right nought it hath me deered,
When he had done his will all out,
And I had put him out of doubt,
" Sir," I sayd, " I have right great will,
Your lust and pleasure to fulfill,
Looke ye my service take at gree,
By thilke fayth ye owe to me,
I say nought for recreaundise,
For I nought doubt of your service.
" But the servaunt travaileth in vaine,
That for to serven doth his paine
Unto that lord, which in no wise,
Conne him no thanke for his service."

Love sayed, Dismaie thee nought,
Sith thou for succour hast me sought,
In thanke thy service woll I take,
And high of degree woll thee make,
If wickednesse ne hinder thee,
But (as I hope) it shall nought bee,
To worship no wight by aventure,

May come, but he paine endure.
" Abide and suffer thy distresse,
That hurteth now, it shall be lesse.
I wote my selfe what may thee save,
What medicine thou wouldest have.
And if thy truth to me thou keepe,
I shall unto thine helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem cle
Where so they be old or grene,
Thou shalt be holpen at wordes few,
For certainly thou shalt well shew,
Where that thou servest with good will,
For to accomplishen and fulfill
My commaundements day and night,
Which I to lovers yeve of right."

" Ah sir, for Goddes love" (sayd I)
" Er ye passe hence ententifely,
Your commaundements to me say,
And I shall keepe hem if I may,
For hem to keepen is all my thought:
And if so be I wote hem nought,
Than may I unwittingly,
Wherefore I pray you entierly,
With all mine herte, me to lere,
That I trespace in no manere."
The god of love then charged me
Anon, as ye shall here and see,
Word by word, by right emprise,
So as the Romaunt shall devise.
The maister leseth his time to lere,
When the disciple woll not here,
It is but vaine on him to swinke,
That on his learning woll not thinke,

Who so lust love, let him entend,
For now the Romance beginneth to amend.
Now is good to heare in fay,
If any be that can it say,
And point it as the reason is
Set for other gate ywis,
It shall nat well in all thing,
Be brought to good understanding,
For a reader that pointeth ill,
A good sentence may oft spill:
The booke is good at the ending,
Made of newe and lustie thing:
For who so woll the ending here,
The craft of love he shall now lere,
If that he woll so long abide,
Till I this Romaunce maie unhide,
And undoe the signifiaunce
Of this dreame into Romaunce,
The soothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shall be kid,
When I undoen have this dreaming,
Wherein no worde is of leasing.

"Villanie at the beginning,
I woll," sayd Love, "over all thing
Thou leave, if thou wolt ne be
False, and trespace ayenst me;
I curse and blame generally
All hem that loven villany,
For villanie maketh villeine
And by his deeds a chorle is seine.
"These villaines arne without pitie,
Friendship, love, and all bountie.
I nill receive unto my servise

Hem that been villaines of emprise.
"But understond in thine entent,
That this is not mine entendement,
To clepe no wight in no ages
Onely gentle for his linages:
But who so is vertuous,
And in his port not outrageous,
When such one thou seest thee before,
Though he be not gentle borne,
Thou maiest well seine this in sooth,
That he is g[illegible]because he doth
As longeth to [illegible]ntleman:
Of hem none other deme I can,
For certainly wit[illegible]outen dreede,
A chorle is demed by his deede,
Of hye or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kinred that he bee.
Ne say nought for none evill will,
Thing that is to holden still,
It is no worship to mis-saie,
Thou mayest ensample take of Kaie,
That was sometime for mis-sayeng,
Hated both of old and yeng:
As ferre as Gawein the worthie,
Was praysed for his courtesie,
Kaie was hated, for he was fell,
Of word dispitous and cruell;
Wherefore be wise and acqueintable,
Goodly of word, and reasonable:
Both to lesse and eke to mare,
And when thou commest there men are,
Looke that thou have in custome ay,
First to salve hem if thou may:
And if it fall, that of hem somme

Salve the first, be not domme,
But quite him courtesly anone
Without abiding, ere they gone.
"For nothing eke thy tongue applie
To speake words of ribauldrie,
To villaine speech in no degree
Let never thy lippe unbounden bee:
For I nought hold him in good faith
Curteis, that foule wordes saith:
And all women serve and preise,
And to thy power hir honour reise:
And if that any mis-sayere
Despise women, that thou maist here,
Blame him, and bid him hold him still,
And set thy might and all thy will
Women and ladies for to please,
And to doe thing that may hem ease,
That they ever speake good of thee,
For so thou maiest best praised bee.
"Looke fro pride thou keepe thee wele,
For thou maiest both perceive and feele,
That pride is both folly and sin,
And he that pride hath him within,
Ne may his herte in no wise,
Meken ne souplen to service:
For pride is found in everie part,
Contrarie unto Loves art:
And he that loveth truely,
Should him conteine jollily,
Without pride in sundrie wise,
And him disguisen in queintise,
For queint array, without drede,
Is nothing proude, who taketh hede,
For fresh array, as men may see,

Without pride may ofte bee.
" Maintaine thy selfe after thy rent,
Of robe and eke of garment,
For many sithe faire clothing
A man amendeth in much thing.
" And looke alway that they be shape,
(What garment that thou shalt make)
Of him that can best do,
With all that partaineth thereto,
Pointes and sleeves be well sittand,
Right and streight on the hand,
Of shone and bootes, new and faire,
Looke at the least you have a paire,
And that they sit so fetously,
That these rude may utterly
Marvaile, sith that they sit so plaine,
How they come on or off againe.
Weare streighte gloves with aumere
Of silke: and alway with good chere
Thou yeve, if thou have richesse,
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.
Alway be merry, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway;
Have hatte of floures fresh as May,
Chapelet of roses of Whitsunday,
For such arraie ne costneth but lite.
Thine hondes wash, thy teeth make white,
And let no filth upon thee bee,
Thy nayles blacke, if thou maiest see,
Voide it alwaie deliverly,
And kembe thine head right jollily:
Farce not thy visage in no wise,
For that of love is nat th'emprise,
For love doth haten, as I finde,

A beautie that commeth not of Kinde:
Alway in herte I read thee,
Glad and merry for to be,
And be as joyfull as thou can,
Love hath no joy of sorrowfull man,
That evill is full of curtesie,
That knoweth in his maladie,
For ever of love the sickenesse
Is meint with sweete and bitternesse:
The sore of love is marvailous,
For now the lover is joyous,
Now can he plaine, now can he grone,
Now can he singen, now maken mone,
To day he plaineth for heavinesse,
To morrow he plaineth for jolynesse:
The life of love is full contrarie,
Which stoundemele can oft varie;
But if thou canst mirthes make,
That men in gre woll glady take,
Doe it goodly I command thee,
For men should, wheresoever they be,
Doe thing that hem fitting is,
For thereof commeth good loos and pris.
Whereof that thou be vertuous,
Ne be nat straunge ne daungerous:
For if that thou good rider be,
Pricke gladly that men may see;
In armes also if thou conne,
Pursue till thou a name hast wonne:
And if thy voice be faire and clere,
Thou shalt maken no great daungere.
Whan to sing they goodly pray,
It is thy worship for to obay:
Also to you it longeth aye,

To harpe and citterne, daunce and playe,
For if he can well foot and daunce,
It may him greatly doe avaunce,
Emong eke for thy lady sake,
Songes and complaintes that thou make,
For that meven in her hart,
When they readen of thy smart.
Looke that no man for scarce thee hold,
For that may greeve thee manifold:
Reason woll that a lover be
In his yeftes more large and free
Than chorles that been not of loving,
For who thereof can any thing,
He shall be lefe aie for to yeve,
In londes lore who so woll leve,
For he that through a sodain sight,
Or for a kissing anon right,
Yave hole his heart, in will and thought,
And to himselfe keepeth right nought,
After this swift, it is good reason,
He yeve his good in abandon.

" Now woll I shortly here reherse,
Of that I have sayd in verse,
All the sentence by and by,
In wordes fewe compendiously,
That thou the better mayest on hem think,
Whether so it be thou wake or winke,
For the wordes little greeve,
A man to keepe, when it is breeve.
" Who so with Love woll gone or ride
He mote be courteous, and voide of pride,
Merry and full of jollite,
And of largesse a losed be.

"First I joyne thee here in penaunce,
That ever without repentaunce,
Thou set thy thought in thy loving
To last without repenting,
And thinke upon thy mirthes sweet
That shall follow after whan ye meet.
"And for thou true to love shalt be,
I will and commaunde thee,
That in one place thou set all hole
Thine herte, without halfen dole,
For trecherie and sikernesse,
For I loved never doublenesse:
To many his herte that woll depart,
Everich shall have but little part,
But of him drede I me right nought,
That in one place setteth his thought:
Therefore in o place it set,
And let it never thence flet:
For if thou yevest it in lening,
I holde it but wretched thing:
Therefore yeve it whole and quite,
And thou shalt have the more merite.
If it be lent than after soone,
The bountie and the thankes is doone,
But in love, free yeven thing
Requireth a great guerdoning.
"Yeve it in yeft all quite fully,
And make thy gift debonairly:
For men that yeft holde more dere
That yeven is with gladsome chere.
"That gifte nought to praysen is
That man yeveth maugre his
Whan thou hast yeven thine heart (as I
Have sayd) thee here openly,

Than adventures shull thee fall,
Which hard and heavie been withall:
For oft when thou bethinkest thee
Of thy loving, where so thou be,
Fro folke thou must depart in hie,
That none perceive thy maladie,
But hide thine harme thou must alone,
And go forth sole, and make thy mone:
Thou shalt no while be in o state,
But whilom cold and whilom hate,
Now redde as rose, now yellow and fade,
Such sorow I trow thou never hade:
Cotidien, ne quarteine,
It is not so full of peine,
For often times it shall fall,
In love among thy paines all,
That thou thy selfe all holy,
Foryetten shalt so utterly,
That many times thou shalt bee,
Still as an image of tree,
Domme as a stone, without stirring
Of foote or honde, without speaking.
"Than soone after all thy paine,
To memorie shalt thou come againe,
A man abashed wonder sore,
And after sighen more and more:
For wite thou wele withouten wene,
In such a state full oft have bene,
That have the evill of love assaide,
Wher-through thou art so dismaide.

"After a thought shall take thee so,
That thy love is too ferre the fro:
Thou shalt say, 'God, what may this be,

That I ne may my ladie see?
Mine heart alone is to her goe,
And I abide all sole in woe,
Departed fro mine owne thought,
And with mine eien se right nought.
" ' Alas mine eyen sene I ne may,
My carefull herte to convay,
Mine hertes guide, but they be,
I praise nothing what ever they se:
Shull they abide than, nay,
But gone and visiten without delay
That mine heart desireth so
For certainly, but if they go.
" ' A foole my selfe I may well hold,
When I ne se what mine hart wold,
Wherefore I woll gone her to sene,
Or eased shall I never bene,
But I have some tokening.'
" Then goest thou forth without dwelling,
But oft thou faylest of thy desire,
Er thou mayest come her any nere,
And wastest in vaine thy passage:
Than fallest thou in a new rage,
For want of sight thou ginnest mourne,
And homeward pensive thou dost retourne:
In great mischiefe than shalt thou bee,
For than againe shall come to thee
Sighes and plaintes with new wo,
That no itching pricketh so:
Who wote it nought, he may goe lere,
Of hem that buyen love so dere.
" Nothing thine heart appeasen may,
That oft thou wolt gone and assay,
If thou maiest seene by adventure

Thy lives joy, thine heartes cure,
So that by grace, if thou might
Attaine of her to have a sight,
Than shalt thou done none other deed,
But with that sight thine eyen feed:
That faire fresh whan thou mayst see,
Thine herte shall so ravished bee,
That never thou wouldest thy thankes lete
Ne remove, for to see that swete:
The more thou seest in soothfastnesse,
The more thou covetest of that sweetnesse
The more thine herte brenneth in fire,
The more thine herte is in desire.
For who considereth everie dele,
It may be likened wonder wele,
The paine of love unto a fere,
For evermore thou neighest nere,
Thought, or who so that it be,
For verie sooth I tell it thee,
The hotter ever shalt thou brenne,
As experience shall thee kenne,
Where so commest in any cost,
Who is next fire he brenneth most:
And yet forsooth for all thine heat,
Though thou for love swelte and sweat,
Ne for no thing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passe away,
And though thou goe, yet must thou nede,
Thinke all day on her faire hede,
Whome thou beheld with so good will,
And hold thy selfe beguiled ill,
That thou ne hadst ne hardiment,
To shew her ought of thine entent;
Thine herte full sore thou wolt dispise,

And eke repreve of cowardise,
That thou so dull in every thing,
Were domme for drede, without speaking.
"Thou shalt eke thinke thou didst folly,
That thou were her so faste by,
And durst not auntre thee to say
Some thing er thou came away,
For thou hadest no more wonne,
To speake of her whan thou begonne:
But yet if she would for thy sake,
In armes goodly thee have take,
It should have be more worth to thee,
Than of treasour great plentee.
"Thus shalt thou mourne and eke complain,
And yet encheson to gone again,
Unto thy walke, or to thy place,
Where thou beheld her fleshly face,
And never for false suspection,
Thou wouldest finde occasion,
For to gone unto her house,
So art thou than desirouse,
A sight of her for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any errand mightest make
Thider, for thy loves sake:
Full faine thou wouldest, but for dreede
Thou goest not, least that men take heede,
Wherefore I read in thy going,
And also in thine againe comming,
Thou be well ware that men ne wit,
Feine thee other cause than it,
To goe that way, or fast bie,
To heale well is no folie:
And if so be it happe thee,

That thou thy love there mayst see,
In siker wise thou her salewe,
Wherewith thy colour woll transmewe,
And eke thy bloud shall all to quake,
Thy hewe eke chaungen for her sake,
But word and wit, with chere full pale
Shull want for to tell thy tale,
And if thou mayest so ferre forth winne,
That thou reason durst beginne,
And wouldest saine three things or mo,
Thou shalt full scarcely saine the two,
Though thou bethinke thee never so wele——,
Thou shalt foryete yet somedele.

"But if thou deale with trechery,
For false lovers mowe all fouly
Sain what hem lust withouten dred,
They be so double in hir falshed,
For they in herte can thinke o thing
And saine another, in hir speaking,
And when thy speech is ended all,
Right thus to thee it shall befall:
If any word than come to minde,
That thou to say hast left behinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in great martire,
For thou shalt brenne as any fire,
This is the strife and eke the affraie,
And the battaile that lasteth aie:
This bargaine end may never take,
But if that she thy peace will make.
"And whan the night is commen anon,
A thousand angres shall come upon,
To bed as fast thou wolt thee dight,
There thou shalt have but small delight,

For whan thou wenest for to sleepe,
So full of paine shalt thou creepe,
Stert in thy bed about full wide,
And turne full oft on everie side:
Now downeward groffe, and now upright,
And wallow in woe the longe night,
Thine armes shalt thou sprede abrede,
As man in warre were forwerede.
Than shalt the come a remembraunce
Of her shape and her semblaunce,
Whereto none other may be pere,
And wete thou well without were,
That thee shall see sometime that night,
That thou hast her, that is so bright,
Naked betweene thine armes there,
All soothfastnesse as though it were;
Thou shalt make castles than in Spaine,
And dreame of joy, all but in vaine,
And thee delighten of right nought,
While thou so slumbrest in that thought,
That is so sweete and delitable,
The which in sooth n'is but a fable,
For it ne shall no while last;
Than shalt thou sigh and weepe fast,
And say, 'Deere God, what thing is this,
My dreame is turned all amis,
Which was full sweet and apparent:
But now I wake it is all shent,
Now yede this merry thought away,
Twentie times upon a day
I would this thought would come againe,
For it alleggeth well my paine,
It maketh me full of joyfull thought,
It sleeth me that it lasteth nought.

Ah Lord, why nill ye me succour?
The joy I trow that I langour,
The death I would me shoulde slo,
While I lye in her armes two,
Mine harme is hard withouten wene,
My great unease full oft I mene.

"But woulde Love do so I might
Have fully joy of her so bright,
My paine were quit me richely,
Alas too great a thing aske I:
It is but folly, and wrong wening,
To aske so outragious a thing,
And who so asketh follily,
He mote be warned hastily,
And I ne wote what I may say,
I am so ferre out of the way,
For I would have full great liking,
And full great joy of lasse thing,
For would she of her gentlenesse,
Withouten more, me ones kesse,
It were to me a great guerdon,
Release of all my passion:
But it is hard to come thereto,
All is but folly that I do,
So high I have mine herte set,
Where I may no comfort get,
I wote not where I say well or nought,
But this I wote well in my thought,
That it were bette of her alone
For to stint my woe and mone:
A looke on her I cast goodly,
That for to have all utterly,
Of another all hole the play.

Ah Lord, where shall I bide the day
That ever she shall my ladie be,
He is full cured, that may her see.
Ah God, when shall the dawning spring,
To liggen thus as an angrie thing,
I have no joy thus here to lye,
When that my love is not me bye:
A man to lyen hath great disease,
Which may not sleepe ne rest in ease,
I would it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away,
For were it day, I would up rise,
Ah slowe Sunne, shew thine enprise,
Speede thee to spread thy beames bright,
And chase the darknesse of the night,
To put away the stoundes strong,
Which in me lasten all too long.'

"The night shalt thou continue so,
Without rest, in paine and wo,
If ever thou knew of love distresse,
Thou shalt mo learne in that sicknesse,
And thus enduring shalt thou lye
And rise on morow up earlye,
Out of thy bed, and harneis thee
Er ever dawning thou maiest see:
All privily than shalt thou gone,
What whider it be, thy selfe alone,
For raine, or haile, for snow, for slete,
Thider she dwelleth that is so swete,
The which may fall asleepe bee,
And thinketh but little upon thee.
Than shalt thou goe, full foule aferde,
Looke if the gate be unsperde,
And waite without in woe and paine,

Full evill a cold in mind and raine:
Than shalt thou goe the dore before,
If thou mayest finde any shore,
Or hole, or reft, what ever it were,
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to eare
If they within a sleepe be,
I meane all save thy ladie free,
Whom waking if thou mayest espie,
Goe put thy selfe in jeopardie,
To aske grace, and thee bimene,
That she may wete without wene,
That thou all night no rest hast had,
So sore for her thou were bestad.
" Women well ought pitie to take
Of hem that sorrowen for hir sake.
And looke for love of that relike,
That thou thinke none other like,
For whan thou hast so great annoy,
Shall kisse thee er thou goe away,
And hold that in full great deintee,
And for that no man shall thee see
Before the house, ne in the way,
Looke thou be gon againe er day.
Suche comming, and suche going,
Such heavinesse, and such walking,
Maketh lovers withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
For Love leaveth colour ne clearnesse,
Who loveth trew hath no fatnesse,
Thou shalt well by thy selfe see
That thou must needs assaied bee:
For men that shape hem other way
Falsely hir ladies to betray,
It is no wonder though they be fatte,

With false othes her loves they gatte,
For oft I see such losengeours
Fatter than abbots or priours.
" Yet with o thing I thee charge,
That is to say, that thou be large
Unto the maid, that her doth serve,
So best her thanke thou shalt deserve.
Yeve her giftes, and get her grace,
For so thou may thanke purchace,
That she thee worthy hold and free,
Thy ladie, and all that may thee see.
Also her servaunts worship aie,
And please as muche as thou maie,
Great good through hem may come to thee,
Because with her they been privee:
They shall her tell how they thee fand
Curteous and wise, and well doand,
And she shall preise well thee more.
Looke out of lond thou be not fore,
And if such cause thou have, that thee
Behoveth to gone out of countree,
Leave hole thine herte in hostage,
Till thou againe make thy passage,
Thinke long to see the swete thing
That hath thine heart in her keeping.
" Now have I told thee, in what wise
A lover shall doe me servise,
Do it than, if thou wolte have
The mede that thou after crave."

When Love all this had boden me,
I said him: " Sir how may it be
That lovers may in such manere,
Endure the paine ye have sayd here?

I marvaile me wonder fast,
How any man may live or last
In suche paine, and such brenning,
In sorrow and thought, and such sighing,
Aie unreleased woe to make,
Whether so it be they sleepe or wake,
In such annoy continually,
As helpe me God this marvaile I
How man, but he were made of steele,
Might live a moneth, such pains to feele."

The god of love then sayd me,
" Friend, by the faith I owe to thee,
May no man have good, but he it buy:
A man loveth more tenderly
The thing that he hath bought most dere.
For wete thou well without were,
In thanke that thing is taken more,
For which a man hath suffred sore:
Certes no woe ne may attaine,
Unto the sore of loves paine,
None evill thereto ne may amount,
No more than a man count
The drops that of the water bee:
For drie as well the grete see
Thou mightest, as the harmes tell
Of hem that with Love dwell
In service, for paine hem sleeth,
And that eche would flee the death
And trowe they should never escape,
Nere that hope couth hem make,
Glad as man in prison sete,
And may not getten for to ete
But barly bread, and water pure,

And lyeth in vermin and in ordure,
With all this yet can he live,
Good hope such comfort hath him yeve,
Which maketh wene that he shall be
Delivered and come to libertie,
In fortune is full trust,
Though he lye in straw or dust,
In hope is all his sustaining:
And so faire lovers in her wening,
Which love hath set in his prison
Good hope is her salvation:
Good hope (how sore that they smart)
Yeveth hem both will and hart
To profer her body to martire,
For hope so sore doth hem desire
To suffer each harme that men devise,
For joy that afterward shall arise.

Hope in desire catch victorie,
In hope of love is all the glorie,
For hope is all that love may yeve,
Nere hope, there should no lenger live.
Blessed be hope, which with desire,
Avaunceth lovers in such manire.
Good hope is curteis for to please,
To keepe lovers from all disease.
Hope keepeth his lond, and woll abide,
For any perill that may betide,
For hope to lovers, as most chiefe,
Doth hem endure all mischiefe,
Hope is hir helpe whan mistere is.
And I shall yeve thee eke ywis,
Three other thinges, that great sollace
Doth to hem that be in my lace.

" The firste good that may be found,
To hem that in my lace be bound,
Is swete thought, for to record
Thing wherewith thou canst accord
Best in thine herte, where she be,
Thinking in absence is good to thee.
Whan any lover doth complaine,
And liveth in distresse and in paine
Than swete thought shall come as blive,
Away his anger for to drive,
It maketh lovers to have remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high pleasaunce,
That hope hath hight him for to winne,
For thought anone than shall beginne,
As farre God wote as he can finde,
To make a mirrour of his minde,
For to behold he woll not let,
Her person he shall afore him set,
Her laughing eyen persaunt and clere,
Her shape, her form, her goodly chere,
Her mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so savourous,
Of all her feyters he shall take heed,
His eyen with all her limmes feed.
Thus swete thinking shall aswage
The paine of lovers, and hir rage,
Thy joy shall double without gesse
Whan thou thinkest on her seemelinesse,
Or of her laughing, or of her chere
That to thee made thy lady dere,
This comfort woll I that thou take,
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse saverous,
Thou shouldest not ben too daungerous.

" The second shall be swete speche,
That hath to many one be leche,
To bring hem out of woe and were,
And helpe many a bachelere,
And many a ladie sent succour,
That have loved paramour,
Through speaking, whan they might heare,
Of hir lovers to hem so deare:
To me it voideth all hir smart,
The which is closed in hir hart.
In heart it maketh hem glad and light,
Speech, whan they mowe have sight.
And therefore now it commeth to mind,
In olde dawes as I find,
That clerkes written that her knew,
There was a ladie fresh of hew,
Which of her love made a song,
On him for to remember among,
In which she sayd, ' Whan that I heare
Speaken of him that is so deare,
To me it voideth all smart,
Ywis he sitteth so nere mine hart,
To speake of him at eve or morrow,
It cureth me of all my sorrow,
To me is none so high pleasaunce
As of his person daliaunce:'
She wist full well that sweet speaking
Comforteth in full muche thing,
Her love she had full well assaide,
Of him she was full well apaide,
To speake of him her joy was set.
Therefore I read thee that thou get
A fellow that can well counsele,
And keepe thy counsaile, and welhele

To whom goe shew wholly thine hart
Both wele and woe, joy and smart:
To get comfort to him thou go,
And prively between you two,
Ye shall speake of that goodly thing,
That hath thine heart in her keeping,
Of her beaute and her semblaunce,
And of her goodly countenaunce,
Of all thy state, thou shalt him say,
And aske him counsaile how thou may,
Do any thing that may her please,
For it to thee shall doe great ease,
That he may wete thou trust him so,
Both of thy wele and of thy wo.
And if his heart to love be sette,
His companie is much the bette,
For reason woll he shew to thee
All utterly his privite,
And what she is he loveth so
To thee plainly he shall undo,
Without drede of any shame,
Both tell her renome and her name.
Than shall he further farre and nere,
And namely to thy ladie dere
In siker wise, ye every other,
Shall helpen as his owne brother,
In trouthe without doublenesse,
And keepen close in sikernesse:
For it is noble thing in fay,
To have a man thou darste say
Thy privie counsaile everie dele,
For that woll comfort thee right wele,
And thou shalt hold thee well apaide,
When such a friend thou hast assaide.

"THE thirde good of great comfort
That yeveth to lovers most disport,
Commeth of sight and beholding,
That cleped is swete looking,
The whiche may thee none ease do,
Whan thou art ferre thy ladie fro,
Wherefore thou prese alway to be
In place, where thou mayest her see:
For it is thing most amerous
Most delectable and saverous,
For to asswage a mannes sorrow
To seen his ladie by the morrow,
For it is a full noble thing
Whan thine eyen have meeting,
With that relike precious,
Whereof they be so desirous.
But all day after sooth it is,
They have no drede to faren amis,
They dreden neither winde ne raine,
Ne none other manner paine:
For when thine eyen were thus in blisse,
Yet of her courtesie ywisse
Alone they cannot have hir joy,
But to the herte they convoy
Part of hir blisse, to him thou send,
Of all this harme to make an end.
"The eye is a good messenger,
Which can to the heart in such manner
Tidinges sende, that hath sene
To voide him of his paines clene:
Whereof the heart rejoyseth so
That a great partie of his wo
Is voided, and put away to flight.
Right as the darkenesse of the night

Is chased with clerenesse of the moone,
Right so is all his woe full soone
Devoided cleane, whan that the sight
Beholden may that fresh wight
That the herte desireth so,
That all his darknesse is ago,
For than the herte is all at ease,
Whan they seen that may hem please.
Now have I declared thee all out,
Of that thou were in dread and dout,
For I have told thee faithfully,
What thee may curen utterly,
And all lovers that woll be
Faithfull, and full of stabilite,
Good hope alway keepe by thy side,
And sweet thought make eke abide,
Sweet looking and sweet speche,
Of all thine harmes they shall be leche,
Of everie thou shalt have great pleasaunce,
If thou canst bide in sufferaunce,
And serve well without feintise,
Thou shalt be quite of thine emprise
With more guerdoun, if that thou live,
But all this time this I thee yeve.

The god of love, whan all the day
Had taught me, as ye have heard say,
And enformed compendously,
He vanished away all sodainly,
And I alone left all sole,
So full of complaint and of dole,
For I saw no man there me by.
My woundes me greeved wondersly,
Me for to curen nothing I knewe,

Save the bothum bright of hewe,
Whereon was sette hooly my thought,
Of other comfort knew I nought,
But it were through the God of Love,
I knew nat else to my behove
That might me ease or comfort gette,
But if he would him entermette.
The roser was withouten dout
Closed with an hedge without,
As ye toforne have heard me saine,
And fast I besied, and would faine
Have passed the haie, if I might
Have getten in by any sleight
Unto the bothum so faire to see,
But ever I dradde blamed to bee,
If men would have suspection
That I would of entention
Have stole the roses that there were,
Therefore to enter I was in fere.
But at the last, as I bethought
Whether I should passe or nought,
I sawe come with a glad chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature and of good height,
And Bialacoil forsooth he height:
Sonne he was to Curtesie,
And he me graunted full gladly,
The passage of the utter hay,
And sayd: "Sir, how that you may
Passe, if your will bee
The freshe roser for to see:
And ye the swete savour fele,
Your warrans may right wele,
So thou thee keepe fro folly,

Shall no man doe thee villany,
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shall not faine, dredeth nought,
For I am bound to your servise,
Fully devoid of feintise."
Than unto Bialacoil sayd I,
"I thanke you sir full hartely,
And your behest take at gree,
That ye so goodly profer mee,
To you it commeth of great fraunchise,
That ye me profer your servise."
Than after full deliverly,
Through the breres anon went I,
Whereof encombred was the haie,
I was well pleased, the soth to saie,
To se the bothum faire and swote,
So freshe sprong out of the rote.

And Bialacoil me served wele,
Whan I so nigh me might fele
Of the bothum the sweet odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour:
But than a chorle, foule him betide,
Beside the roses gan him hide,
To keepe the roses of that rosere,
Of whom the name was Daungere:
This chorle was hid there in the greves,
Covered with grasse and with leves,
To spie and take whom that he fond
Unto that roser put an hond.
He was not sole, for there was mo,
For with him were other two
Of wicked manners, and evill fame,
That one was cleped by his name,

Wicked Tongue, God yeve him sorrow,
For neither at eve ne at morrow,
He can of no man good speake,
On many a just man doth he wreake.
  There was a woman that eke hight
Shame, that who can reckon right,
Trespasse was her fathers name,
Her mother Reason, and thus was Shame
Brought of these ilke two:
And yet had Trespasse never ado
With Reason, ne never leie her by,
He was hidous and so ugly,
I meane this that Trespasse hight,
But Reason conceiveth of a sight,
Shame of that I spake aforne.
  And whan that Shame was thus borne,
It was ordained, that Chastite,
Should of the roser ladie be:
Which of the bothums more and las,
With sundrie folkes assailed was,
That she ne wiste what to do,
For Venus her assaileth so,
That night and day for her she stall
Bothums and roses over all.
To Reason than prayeth Chastite,
Whom Venus hath flemed over the see,
That she her daughter would her lene,
To keepe the roser fresh and grene.
  Anon Reason to Chastite
Is fully assented that it be,
And graunted her at her request,
That Shame, because she is honest,
Shall keeper of the roser be:
And thus to keepe it, there were three

That none should hardy be ne bold,
(Were he young or were he old)
Againe her will away to bere
Bothums ne roses, that there were.
I had well sped, had I nat been
Awaited with these three, and seen:
For Bialacoil, that was so faire,
So gracious and debonaire,
Quitte him to me full courteously,
And me to please badde that I,
Should drawe to the bothum nere,
Prese in to touche the rosere
Which bare the roses, he yave me leve,
This graunt ne might but little greve:
And for he saw it liked me,
Right nigh the bothum pulled he
A leafe all grene, and yave me that
The which full nigh the bothum sat.
I made of that leafe full queint,
And whan I felt I was acqueint
With Bialacoil, and so prive,
I wende all my will had be.
Than wext I hardy for to tell
To Bialacoil how me befell,
Of love, that tooke and wounded me,
And sayd: "Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joy have in no wise,
Upon no side, but it arise,
For sithe (if I shall not faine)
In herte I have had so great paine,
So great annoy, and such affraie,
That I ne wotte what I shall saie,
I drede your wrothe to deserve,
Lever me were, that knives kerve

My bodie should in peces small,
Than in any wise it should fall,
That ye wrothed should been with me."
" Say boldely thy will" (quod he)
" I nill be wroth if that I may,
For nought that thou shalt to me say."

Than sayd I, " Sir, not you displese,
To knowen of my great unease,
In which only love hath me brought,
For paines great, disease and thought,
Fro day to day it doth me drie,
Supposeth not, sir, that I lie,
In me five woundes did he make,
The sore of which shall never slake,
But ye the bothum graunt me,
Which is most passaunt of beaute,
My life, my death, and my martire,
And treasour that I most desire."
Than Bialacoil affraied all
Sayd " Sir, it may not fall,
That ye desire it may not arise,
What would ye shend me in this wise:
A mokell foole than I were,
If I suffred you away to beare
The fresh bothum, so faire of sight,
For it were neither skill ne right,
Of the roser ye broke the rinde,
Or take the rose aforne his kinde;
Ye are not courteous to aske it,
Let it still on the roser sit,
And let it grow till it amended be,
And perfectly come to beaute,
I nolde not that it pulled were,

Fro the roser that it bere,
To me it is so lefe and dere."
With that anon start out Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hidde,
His malice in his chere was kidde:
Full great he was and blacke of hewe,
Sturdy, and hidous, who so him knewe,
Like sharpe urchons his haire was grow,
His eyes red sparkling as the fire glow,
His nose frounced full kyked stood,
He come criand as he were wood,
And sayd, "Bialacoil, tell me why
Thou bringest hider so boldely
Him that so nigh the rosere,
Thou worchest in a wrong manere,
He thinketh to dishonour thee,
Thou art well worthy to have maugre,
To let him of the rosere witte,
Who serveth a felon is evill quitte.
"Thou wouldest have done great bountee,
And he with shame would quite thee,
Flye hence, fellow, I rede thee go,
It wanteth little he woll thee slo,
For Bialacoil ne knew thee nought,
Whan thee to serve he set his thought,
For thou wolt shame him if thou might,
Both againe reson and right,
I woll no more in thee affie,
That commest so slightly for t'espie:
For it prooveth wonder wele,
Thy sleight and treason everie dele."
I durst no more make there abode,
For the chorle he was so wode,
So gan he threat and menace,

And through the haie he did me chace,
For feare of him I trembled and quoke,
So chorlishly his head he shoke,
And sayd, if eft he might me take,
I should not from his hands scape.
Than Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I all soole disconsolate,
Was left alone in paine and thought,
Fro shame to death I was nigh brought.
Than thought I on my high folly,
How that my bodie utterly,
Was yeve to paine and to martire,
And thereto had I so great ire,
That I ne durst the haies passe,
There was no hope, there was no grace,
I trow never man wist of paine,
But he were laced in Loves chaine,
Ne no man, and sooth it is,
But if he love, what anger is.
Love holdeth his hest to me right wele,
Whan paine (he sayd) I should fele,
No herte may thinke, no tongue saine,
A quarter of my woe and paine,
I might not with the anger last,
Mine heart in point was for to brast,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so,
Was through Daunger cast me fro,
A long while stoode I in that state,
Till that me sawe so madde and mate,
The ladie of the high ward,
Which from her tower looked thiderward.
Reason, men clepe that lady,
Which from her tower deliverly,
Come downe to me without more.

But she was neither yonge, ne here,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne leane,
But best, as it were in a meane:
Her eyen two were clere and light
As any candle that brenneth bright,
And on her head she had a coroune,
Her seemed well an high personne:
For round environ her crounet
Was full of riche stones fret.
Her goodly semblaunt by devise,
I trow was made in Paradise,
For nature had never such a grace,
To forge a worke of such compasse:
For certain, but if the letter lye,
God him selfe, that is so hye,
Made her after his image,
And yafe her sith such avantage,
That she hath might and seignory
To keepe men from all folly,
Who so woll trowe her lore,
Ne may offenden nevermore.
And while I stoode this darke and p
Reason began to me her tale,
She saied: "Alhaile my sweete frend,
Folly and childhood woll thee shend,
Which thee have put in great affray,
Thou hast bought dere time of May,
That made thine herte merrie to be;
In evill time thou wentest to see
The gardin, whereof Idlenesse
Bare the key and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
With her, and had acquaintaunce:
Her acquaintance is perillous,

First soft, and after noyous,
She hath thee trashed without wene,
The god of love had thee not sene,
Ne had Idlenesse thee convaid
In the verge where Mirth him pleid,
If Folly have surprised thee,
Do so that it recovered be,
And be well ware to take no more
Counsaile, that greeveth after sore:
He is wise, that woll himselfe chastise.
And though a young man in any wise
Trespasse among, and do folly,
Let him nat tarie, but hastely
Let him amend what so be mis,
And eke I counsaile thee ywis,
The god of love hooly foryet,
That hath thee in such paine set,
And thee in herte tormenteth so,
I cannot seen how thou maist go
Other waies thee to garisoun,
For Daunger, that is so feloun,
Felly purposeth thee to werry,
Which is full cruell the sooth to sey.

"And yet of Daunger cometh no blame,
In reward of my daughter Shame,
Which hath the roses in her ward,
As she that may be no musard,
And Wicked Tongue is with these two,
That suffreth no man thider go,
For er a thing be do he shall,
Where that he commeth over all,
In fortie places, if it be sought,
Saie thing that never was done ne wrought,

So much treason is in his male,
Of falsenesse for to faine a tale:
Thou dealest with angrie folke ywis,
Wherefore to thee better is,
From these folke away to fare,
For they woll make thee live in care;
This is the evill that love they call,
Wherein there is but folly all,
For love is folly everie dele;
Who loveth, in no wise may do wele,
Ne set his thought on no good werke,
His schoole he leseth, if he be a clerke,
Or other craft eke, if that he be,
He shall not thrive therein, for he
In love shall have more passioun,
Than monke, hermite, or chanoun:
This paine is hard out of measure,
The joy may eke no while endure,
And in the possession,
Is much tribulation,
The joye it is so short lasting,
And but in hap is the getting;
For I see there many in travaile,
That at last foule faile,
I was nothing thy counsailer,
Whan thou were made the homager
Of god of love too hastely:
Where was no wisedome but folly,
Thine herte was jolly, but not sage,
Whan thou were brought in such a rage,
To yelde thee so readyly,
And to Love of his great maistrie.

" I REDE thee Love away to drive,

That maketh the recche not of thy live,
The folly more fro day to day
Shall growe, but thou it put away;
Take with thy teeth the bridle fast,
To daunt thy herte, and eke the cast
If that thou mayest, to get the defence
For to redresse thy first offence.
Who so his herte alway woll leve,
Shall finde among that shall him greve."
Whan I heard her thus me chastise,
I answeard in full angrie wise,
I prayed her cesse of her speach,
Either to chastise me or teach,
To bidde me my thought refrein,
Which Love hath caught in his demein:
" What wene ye Love woll consent,
(That me assaieth with bowe bent)
To draw mine herte out of his hond,
Which is so quickly in his bond?
That ye counsaile, may never bee,
For whan he first arested mee,
He tooke mine herte so sore him till,
That it is nothing at my will,
He tought it so him for to obey,
That he it sparred with a key.
I pray you let me be all still,
For ye may well, if that ye will,
Your wordes wast in idlenesse,
For utterly withouten gesse,
All that ye sain is but in vaine,
Me were lever die in the paine,
Than Love to me ward should arette,
Falshed or treason on me sette,
I woll me get pris or blame,

And love true to save my name,
Who that me chastiseth, I him hate.
With that word, Reason went her gate,
Whan she saw for no sermoning
She might me fro my folly bring.
Than dismayed I left all soole,
Forwearie, forwandred as a foole,
For I ne knew ne cheriswunce.
Than fell into my remembraunce,
How Love had me to purvey
A fellow, to whome I might sey
My counsaile and my privite,
For that should much availe me.
With that bethought I me, that I
Had a fellowe faste by,
True and siker, courteous, and hend,
And he called was by name a frend,
A truer fellowe was no where none,
In hast to him I went anone,
And to him all my woe I told,
Fro him right nought I would withhold
I told him all without were,
And made my complaint on Daungere,
How for to see he was hidous,
And to me ward contrarious,
The whiche through his cruelte,
Was in point to have meimed me,
With Bialacoil whan he me sey
Within the gardin walke and pley,
Fro me he made him for to goe,
And I be left alone in woe:
I durst no longer with him speake,
For Daunger sayd he would be wreake.
Whan that he sawe how I went,

The freshe bothum for to hent,
If I were hardie to come nere,
Betweene the haie and the rosere.
This frend when he wist of my thought,
He discomforted me right nought,
But saied, " Fellow, be nat so madde,
Ne so abashed nor bestadde,
My selfe I know full well Daungere,
And how he is fierce of chere,
At prime temps, Love to manace,
Full oft I have beene in his case;
A felon first though that he be,
After thou shalt him souple see;
Of long passed I knew him wele,
Ungodly first though men him fele,
He woll meeke after in his bering
Been, for service and obeissing:
I shall thee tell what thou shalt do:
Meekely I rede thou go him to,
Of herte pray him specially
Of thy trespace to have mercy,
And hote him well here to please,
That thou shalt never more him displease:
Who can best serve of flattery,
Shall please Daunger utterly."
My friend hath saied to me so wele,
That he me eased hath somedele,
And eke allegged of my tourment,
For through him had I hardement
Againe to Daunger for to go,
To preve if I might meeke him so.

To Daunger came I all ashamed,
The which aforne me had blamed,

Desiring for to pease my wo,
But over hedge durst I not go,
For he forbode me the passage:
I found him cruell in his rage,
And in his hond a great bourdoun,
To him I kneeled low adoun,
Full meeke of port, and simple of cheere,
And saied, " Sir, I am comen here
Onely to aske of you mercy,
It greeveth me full greatly
That ever my life I wrathed you,
But for to amend I am come now,
With all my might, both loud and still;
To doen right at your owne will,
For Love made me for to do
That I have trespassed hiderto,
Fro whom I ne may withdraw mine heerte,
Yet shall I never for joy ne smart
(What so befall good or ill)
Offende more againe your will,
Lever I have endure disease,
Than do that should you displease.

" I you require, and pray that ye
Of me have mercy and pite,
To stint your ire that greveth so,
That I woll sweare for evermo
To be redressed at your liking
If I trespace in any thing,
Save that (I pray thee) graunt me
A thing, that may nat warned be,
That I may love all onely,
None other thing of you aske I:
I shall doen all ywis,
If of your grace ye graunt me this,

And ye may not letten mee,
For well wote ye that love is free:
And I shall loven such that I will,
Whoever like it well or ill:
And yet ne would I not for all Fraunce
Doe thing to do you displeasaunce."
Than Daunger fell in his entent
For to foryeve his male talent,
But all his wrathe yet at last
He hath released, I praide so fast:
"Shortly" (he saied) "thy request
Is not too mokell dishonest,
Ne I woll not werne it thee,
For yet nothing engreeveth mee:
For though thou love thus evermore,
To me is neither soft ne sore:
Love where that thee list, what re'cheth me,
So ferre fro my roses be:
Trust not on me for none assaie,
In any time to passe the haie."
Thus hath he graunted my prayere,
Than went I forth withouten were
Unto my frend, and told him all,
Which was right joyfull of my tale,
(He saied) "Now goeth well thine affaire,
He shall to thee be debonaire,
Though he aforne was dispitous,
He shall hereafter be gracious:
If he were touched on some good veine,
He should yet rewen on thy peine,
Suffer I rede, and no boast make,
Till thou at goodnes maist him take."
By suffraunce, and by wordes soft,
A man may overcome oft
Him that aforne he had in drede,

In bookes soothly as I rede.
Thus hath my friend with great comfort
Avaunced me with high disport,
Which would me good, as much as I:
And than anon full sodainely
I tooke my leave, and streight I went
Unto the haie, for great talent
I had to seene the fresh bothum,
Wherein lay my salvation,
And Daunger tooke keepe, if that I
Keepe him covenaunt truely;
So sore I dread his manacing,
I durst not breake his bidding,
For least that I were of him shent,
I brake not his commaundement,
For to purchase his good will,
It was for to come there till,
His mercy was too ferre behind
I kept, for I ne might it find.
I complained and sighed sore,
And languished evermore,
For I durst nat overgo,
Unto the rose I loved so,
Throughout my deming utterly,
That he had knowledge certainly:
Than Love me ladde in such a wise,
That in me there was no feintise,
Falshood, ne no trecherie:
And yet he full of villanie,
Of disdaine, and crueltie,
On me ne would have pitie
His cruell will for to refraine,
Tho I wept alway, and me complaine.

And while I was in this turment,
Were come of grace, by God sent,
Fraunchise, and with her Pity,
Fulfilde the bothum of bounty:
They go to Daunger anon right
To ferther me with all hir might,
And helpe in worde and in deed,
For well they saw that it was need.
First of her grace dame Fraunchise
Hath taken of this emprise:
She saied, "Daunger great wrong ye do
To worche this man so much wo,
Or pinen him so angerly,
It is to you great villany:
I cannot see why ne how
That he hath trespassed againe you,
Save that he loveth, wherfore ye shold
The more in charitie of him hold:
The force of love maketh him do this,
Who would him blame he did amis.
He leveth more than he may do,
His paine is hard, ye may see lo:
And love in no wise would consent
That ye have power to repent,
For though that quicke ye would him slo,
Fro love his herte may nat go.
"Now swete sir, it is your ease
Him for to anger or disease.
Alas, what may it you avaunce
To doen to him so great greavaunce?
What worship is it againe him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sith he so lowly every wise
Is ready, as ye lust devise?

If Love have caught him in his laas,
You for to beye in every caas,
And been your subject at your will,
Should ye therefore willen him ill?
Ye shuld him spare more all out,
Than him that is both proud and stout:
Courtesie would that ye succoure
Hem that been meeke under your cure:
His herte is hard that woll not meeke,
Whan men of meekenesse him beseeke."

"This is certaine," saied Pitie,
"We see oft that humilitie,
Both ire, and also felonie
Venquisheth, and also malancholie,
To stonde forth in such duresse
This crueltie and wickednesse:
Wherefore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to maintaine no lenger here
Such cruell warre againe your man,
As wholly yours as ever he can,
Nor that ye worchen no more wo
Upon this caitife that languisheth so,
Which woll no more to you trespace,
But put him wholly in your grace:
His offence ne was but lite,
The god of love it was to wite,
That he your thrall so greatly is,
And if ye harme him ye doen amis,
For he hath had full hard pennaunce,
Sith that ye reft him thaquaintaunce
Of Bialacoil, his most joie,
Which all his paines might acoie:
He was before annoyed sore,

But than ye doubled him well more,
For he of blisse hath been full bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare:
Love hath to him great distresse,
He hath no need of more duresse:
Voideth from him your ire I rede,
Ye may not winnen in this dede,
Maketh Bialacoil repaire againe,
And haveth pitie upon his paine,
For Fraunchise woll, and I Pite,
That mercifull to him ye be,
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have upon him misericorde,
For I you pray, and eke moneste,
Nought to refusen our requeste:
For he is hard and fell of thought,
That for us two woll doe right nought."
Daunger ne might no more endure,
He meeked him unto measure.
"I woll in no wise," saieth Daungere,
"Denie that ye have asked here:
It were too great uncourtesie,
I woll he have the companie
Of Bialacoil, as ye devise,
I woll him let in no wise."
To Bialacoil than went in hie,
Fraunchise, and saied full curteslie:
"Ye have too long be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungerous
Fro him to withdraw your presence,
Which hath do to him great offence,
That ye not would upon him see,
Wherefore a sorrowfull man is hee:
Shape ye to pay him, and to please,

Of my love if ye woll have ease,
Fulfill his will, sith that ye know
Daunger is daunted and brought low
Through helpe of me and of Pite
You dare no more aferde be."
"I shall do right as ye will"
Saieth Bialacoil, "for it is skill,
Sith Daunger woll that it so be:"
Than Fraunchise hath him sent to me.

Bialacoil at the beginning
Salued me in his comming,
No straungenesse was in him seene,
No more than me had wrathed been,
As faire semblaunt than shewed he me,
And goodly, as aforne did he,
And by the honde without dout,
Within the hais right all about,
He lad me with right good chere,
All environ the vergere,
That Daungere had me chased fro:
Now have I leave over all to go,
Now am I raised at my devise
Fro Hell unto Paradise.
Thus Bialacoil of gentlenesse
With all his paine and businesse,
Hath shewed me onely of grace
The efters of the swote place.
I saw the rose when I was nigh,
Was greater woxen, and more high,
Freshe, roddy, and faire of hew,
Of colour ever iliche new:
And whan I had it long seene,
I saw that through the leaves greene

The rose spread to spannishing,
To seene it was a goodly thing,
But it ne was so sprede on brede,
That men within might know the sede,
For it covert was and close
Both with the leaves and with the rose,
The stalke was even and grene upright,
It was thereon a goodly sight,
And well the better without wene
For the seede was not sene,
Full faire it sprad, the god of blesse,
For such another, as I gesse,
Aforne ne was, ne more vermeile,
I was abawed for marveile,
For ever the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loves laas.
Long I abode there sooth to say,
Till Bialacoil I gan to pray,
Whan that I saw him in no wise
To me warnen his servise,
That he me would graunt a thing,
Which to remember is well fitting:
This is to saine, that of his grace
He would me yeve leisure and space
To me that was so desirous
To have a kissing precious
Of the goodly fresh rose,
That so sweetly smelleth in my nose,
"For if it you displeased nought,
I woll gladly, as I have sought,
Have a kiss thereof freely
Of your yeft, for certainely
I woll none have but by your leve,
So loth me were you for to greve."

He saied, "Frend, so God me spede,
Of Chastitie I have such drede,
Thou shouldest not warned be for me,
But I dare not for Chastite:
Againe her dare I not misdo,
For alway biddeth she me so
To yeve no lover leave to kisse,
For who therto may winnen ywisse,
He of the surplus of the praie
May live in hope to get some day,
For who so kissing may attaine,
Of loves paine hath (sooth to saine)
The best and moste avenaunt,
And earnest of the remenaunt."

Of his answere I sighed sore,
I durst assay him tho no more,
I had such drede to greve him aye;
A man shuld not too much assaye
To chafe his friend out of measure,
Nor put his life in aventure;
For no man at the first stroke
Ne may not fell downe an oke,
Nor of the reisins have the wine,
Till grapes be ripe and well afine,
Be sore empressed, I you ensure,
And drawen out of the pressure:
But I forpeined wonder strong,
Though that I abode right long
And after the kisse, in paine and wo,
Sith I to kisse desired so:
Till that renning on my distresse,
There come Venus the goddesse
(Which aye werrieth Chastite)

Came of her grace to succour me,
Whose might is know ferre and wide,
For she is mother of Cupide,

The god of Love, blinde as stone,
That helpeth lovers many one.
This lady brought in her right hond
Of brenning fire a blasing brond,
Whereof the flame and hote fire
Hath many a lady in desire
Of love brought, and sore hette,
And in her service her herte is sette.
This lady was of good entayle,
Right wonderfull of apparaile,
By her attire so bright and shene,
Men might perceive well and sone,
She was not of religioun:
Nor I nill make mentioun
Nor of robe, nor of treasour,
Of broche, neither of her rich attour,
Ne of her girdle about her side,
For that I n'ill not long abide,
But knoweth well, that certainly
She was arraied richely;
Devoid of pride certaine she was,
To Bialacoil she went apaas,
And to him shortely in a clause
She said: "Sir, what is the cause
Ye ben of port so daungerous
Unto this lover, and dainous,
To graunt him nothing but a kisse?
To warne it him ye done amisse,
Sith well ye wot, how that hee
Is Loves servaunt, as ye may see,

And hath beautie, wherthrough he is
Worthy of love to have the blis:
How he is seemely behold and see,
How he is faire, how he is free,
How he is swote and debonaire,
Of age young, lusty, and faire,
There is no lady so hautaine,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chastelaine,
That I nolde hold ungodly,
For to refuse him utterly.
" His breath is also good and swete,
And eke his lips roddy and mete,
Onely to plaine, and to kiss,
Graunt him a kisse of gentleness.
" His teeth arn also white and clene,
Me thinketh wrong withouten wene,
If ye now warne him, trusteth me,
To graunt that a kisse have he,
The lasse ye helpe him that ye haste,
And the more time shull ye waste."
Whan the flame of the very brond
That Venus brought in her right hond,
Had Bialacoil with his hete smete,
Anone he bad me withouten lete,
Graunt to me the rose kisse,
Than of my paine I gan to lisse,
And to the rose anon went I,
And kissed it full faithfully:
There need no man aske if I was blith,
Whan the savour soft and lith
Stroke to mine herte without more,
And me allegged of my sore,
So was I full of joy and blisse,
It is faire such a floure to kisse,

It was so swote and saverous,
I might not be so anguishous,
That I mote glad and jolly be,
Whan that I remembre me,
Yet ever among soothly to saine,
I suffer noie and muche paine.

The see may never be so still,
That with a little wind at will
Overwhelme and tourne also,
As it were wood in wawes go,
After the calme the trouble soone
Mote follow, and chaunge as the Moone.
Right so fareth Love, that selde in one
Holdeth his anker, for right anone
Whan they in ease wene best to live,
They ben with tempest all fordrive:
Who serveth Love, can tell of wo,
The stoundmele joy mote overgo,
Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
For selde in o point Love endureth.
Now is it right me to proceed,
How Shame gan meddle and take heed,
Through whom fell angers I have hade,
And how the strong wall was made,
And the castle of brede and length,
That god of love wan with his strength:
All this romance will I set,
And for no thing ne will I let,
So that it liking to her be,
That is the floure of beaute,
For she may best my labour quite,
That I for her love shall endite.
Wicked Tongue, that the covine

Of every lover can devine.
Worst, and oldest in mine counsaile
(For wicked tongue is ever revelle)
To me ward bare he right great hate,
Espying me early and late,
Till he hath seene the great chere
Of Bialacoil and me yfere:
He might not his tongue withstande
Worse to reporte than he fonde,
He was so full of cursed rage;
It set him wele of his lineage,
For him an irous woman bare.
His tongue was shrill sharpe and shere,
Poignaunt and right kerving,
And wonder bitter in speaking;
For when that he me gan espy,
He swore (withouten vilonie)
Betweene Bialacoil and me
Was evill acquaintance and privee:
He spake thereof so folilie,
That he awaked Jelousie,
Which all afraied in his rising,
When that he heard jangling,
He ran anon as he were wood
To Bialacoil there that he stood,
Which had lever in this caas
Have ben at Reines or Amias,
For fote hote in his fellonie,
To him thus said Jelousie:
"Why hast thou ben so negligent,
To keepen, whan I was absent,
This verger here left in thy ward?
To me thou haddest no regard,
To trust (to thy confusion)

Him thus, to whom suspection
I have right great, for it is nede,
It is well shewed by the dede.
Great fault in thee now have I found,
By God anon thou shalt be bound,
And faste locken in a toure,
Without refuite or succoure.

"For Shame too long hath be thee fro,
Oversoone she was ago,
Whan thou hast lost both drede and fere,
It seemed well she was not here,
She was busie in no wise,
To keepe thee and chastise,
And for to helpen Chastite
To keepe the roser, as thinketh me,
For then this boy knave so boldly,
Ne should not have be hardy
In this verge had such game,
Which now me turneth to great shame."

Bialacoil nist what to say,
Full faine he would have fled away,
For feare have hid, nere that he
All suddainly tooke him with me:
And whan I saw he had so,
This Jelousie take us two,
I was astonied, and knew no rede,
But fled away for very drede.
Then Shame came forth full simply,
She wende have trespaced full greatly,
Humble of her port, and made it simple,
Wearing a vaile in stede of wimple,
As nonnes done in hir abbey:
Because her herte was in affray,

She gan to speake within a throw
To Jelousie, right wonder low.
First of his grace she besought,
And said: "Sir, ne leveth nought
Wicked Tongue, that false espie,
Which is so glad to faine and lie,
He hath you made, through flattering,
On Bialacoil a false leasing:
His falsenesse is not now anew,
It is too long that he him knew:
This is not the first daie,
For Wicked Tongue hath custome aie,
Younge folkes to bewrie,
And false lesings on hem lie.
"Yet neverthelesse I see among,
That the soigne it is so long
Of Bialacoil, hertes to lure,
In Loves service for to endure,
Drawing suche folke him to,
That he had nothing with to do,
But in soothnesse I trowe nought,
That Bialacoil had ever in thought
To do trespace or villanie,
But for his mother Curtesie
Hath taught him ever to be
Good of acquaintaunce and prive,
For he loveth none heavinesse,
But mirth and play, and all gladnesse;
He hateth all trechous,
Soleine folke and envious:
For ye weten how that he
Woll ever glad and joyfull be
Honestly with folke to play:
I have be negligent in good fay

To chastise him, therefore now I
Of herte I crie you here mercy,
That I have ben so recheles
To tamen him withouten lees,
Of my folly I me repent,
Now woll I hole set mine entent
To keepe both low and still
Bialacoil to do your will."
"Shame, Shame" (said Jelousy)
"To be bitrashed great drede have I.
"Lecherie hath clombe so hie,
That almost bleared is mine eie,
No wonder is, if that drede have I,
Over all reigneth Lechery,
Whose might groweth night and day,
Both in cloyster and in abbay,
Chastitie is werried over all,
Therefore I woll with siker wall
Close both roses and rosere,
I have too long in this manere
Left hem unclosed wilfully:
Wherefore I am right inwardly
Sorrowfull, and repent me,
But now they shall no lenger be
Unclosed, and yet I drede sore,
I shall repent ferthermore,
For the game goeth all amis,
Counsaile I must new ywis,
I have too long trusted thee,
But now it shall no lenger bee:
For he may best in every cost
Deceive that men trusten most:
I see well that I am nigh shent,
But if I set my full entent

Remedye to purvay:
Wherefore close I shall the way
From hem that woll the rose espie,
And come to wait me villanie,
For in good faith and in trouth
I woll not let for no slouth
To live the more in sikernesse,
Do make anon a fortresse.
Than close the [redacted] of good savour;
In middes shal [redacted]ake a tour
To put Bialacoil in prison,
For ever I drede me of treason;
I trow I shall him keepe so,
That he shall have no might to go
About to make compagnie
To hem that thinke of villanie,
Ne to no such as hath ben here
Aforne, and found in him good chere,
Which han assailed him to shend,
And with his trowandise to blend,
A foole is eith to begnile,
But may I live a little while,
He shall forthinke his faire semblaunt."
And with that word came Dread avan
Which was abashed, and in great fere,
Whan he wist Jelousie was there.
He was for drede in such affray,
That not a worde durst he say,
But quaking stood full still alone
(Till Jelousie his way was gone)
Save Shame, that him not forsoke,
Both Drede and she full sore quoke,
That at last Drede abraide,
And to his cousin Shame saide.

"Shame" (he said) "in soothfastnesse,
To me it is great heavinesse,
That the noise so ferre is go,
And the slaunder of us two:
But sithe that it is befall,
We may it not againe call,
When once sprung is a fame:
For many a yeare withouten blame
We have ben, and many a day,
For many an April and many a May
We han passed, not ashamed,
Till Jelousie hath us blamed
Of mistrust and suspection
Causelesse, without encheson:
Go we to Daunger hastely,
And let us shew him openly,
That he hath not aright wrought,
Whan that he set not his thought
To keepe better the purprise;
In his doing he is not wise.
He hath to us do great wrong,
That hath suffred now so long
Bialacoil to have his will
All his lustes to fulfill:
He must amend it utterly,
Or els shall he villanously
Exiled be out of this lond:
For he the warre may not withstond
Of Jelousie, nor the greefe,
Sith Bialacoil is at mischeefe."

To Daunger, Shame and Drede anon
The right way ben gon:
The chorle they founde hem aforne

Ligging under an hawthorne.
Under his head no pillow was,
But in the stede a trusse of gras:
He slombred, and a nappe he toke,
Till Shame pitously him shoke,
And great manace on him gan make.
"Why sleepest thou when thou shouldwa
(Quod Shame) "thou dost us villanie,
Who trusteth thee, he doth follie,
To keepe roses or bothums
When they be faire in hir seasons:
Thou art woxe too familiere
Where thou should be straunge of chere,
Stout of thy port, ready to greve:
Thou doest great folly for to leve
Bialacoil here in to call
The yonger man to shenden us all:
Though that thou sleepe, we may here,
Of Jelousie great noise here,
Art thou now late, rise up and hye,
And stop soone and deliverlye
All the gaps of the hay;
Do no favour I thee pray:
It falleth nothing to thy name,
To make fair semblant, were thou mayst

"If Bialacoil be sweet and free,
Dogged and fell thou shuldest bee,
Froward and outragious ywis,
A chorle chaungeth that curteis is:
This have I heard oft in saying,
That man may for no daunting
Make a sparhauke of a bosarde:
All men hold thee for musarde,

That debonaire have founden thee,
It sitteth thee nought curteis to bee,
To do men pleasaunce or servise,
In thee it is recreaundise:
Let thy werkes ferre and nere
Be like thy name, which is Daungere."
Then all abashed in shewing,
Anon spake Drede, right thus saying,
And said, "Daunger, I drede me,
That thou ne wolt besie be
To keepe that thou hast to keepe,
When thou shuldest wake, thou art asleepe:
Thou shalt be greeved certainely,
If thee aspie Jelousy,
Or if he finde thee in blame.
He hath to day assailed Shame,
And chased away with great manace
Bialacoil out of this place,
And sweareth shortly that he shall
Enclose him in a sturdy wall;
And all is for thy wickednesse,
For that thee faileth straungenesse;
Thine herte I trow be failed all;
Thou shalt repent in speciall,
If Jelousie the soothe knew,
Thou shalt forthinke, and sore rew."
With that the chorle his clubbe gan shake,
Frouning his eyen gan to make,
And hidous chere, as man in rage,
For ire he brent in his visage:
Whan that he heard him blamed so,
He said, "Out of my witte I go,
To be discomfite I have great wrong,
Certes, I have now lived too long,

[illegible]
[illegible]
If any man shall more repaire
Into this garden for foule or faire,
Mine herte for ire gothe afere,
That I let any entre here,
I have doe folly now I see,
But now it shall amended be,
Who setteth foot here any more,
Truly he shall repent it sore,
For no man more into this place
Of me to enter shall have grace,
Lever I had with swerdes [illegible]
Throughout mine herte, in every veine
Perced to be, with many a veinid,
Than slouth should in me be founden
From henceforth by night or dayes
I shall defend it if I may
Withouten any exception
Of eache manner condition,
And if I it any man graunt,
Holdeth me for recreaunt."

Then Daunger on his feet gan stond,
And hent a burdon in his hond,
Wroth in his ire ne left he nought,
But through the verger he hath sought,
If he might find hole or trace,
Where through that me mote forth by p[illegible]
Or any gappe, he did it close,
That no man might touch a rose
Of the roser all about,
He shetteth every man without.
Thus day by day Daunger is wers,

More wonderfull and more divers,
And feller eke than ever he was,
For him full oft I sing alas,
For I ne may nought through his ire
Recover that I most desire;
Mine herte alas woll brest atwo,
For Bialacoil I wrathed so:
For certainly in every member
I quake, when I me remember
Of the bothum, which I would
Full oft a day seene and behold,
And when I thinke upon the kisse,
And how muche joy and blisse,
I had through the savour swete,
For want of it I grone and grete:
Me thinketh I fele yet in my nose
The swete savour of the rose,
And now I wote that I mote go
So ferre the fresh floures fro,
To me full welcome were the death,
Absence thereof (alas) me sleeth,
For whylome with this rose, alas,
I touched nose, mouth, and face,
But now the death I must abide;
But Love consent another tide,
That ones I touch may and kisse,
I trow my paine shall never lisse;
Thereon is all my covetise,
Which brent my heart in many wise.
Now shall repaire againe sighing,
Long watch on nights, and no sleeping,
Thought in wishing, turment, and wo,
With many a turning to and fro,
That halfe my paine I cannot tell,

For I am fallen into Hell,
From paradise and wealth, the more
My turment greveth more and more,
Annoyeth now the bitternesse,
That I toforne have felt sweetnesse,
And Wicked Tongue, through his falshede,
Causeth all my wo and drede,
On me he lieth a pitous charge,
Because his tongue was too large.
Now it is time shortly that I
Tell you something of Jelousie,
That was in great suspection:
About him left he no mason,
That stone could lay, ne querrour,
He hired hem to make a tour:
And first the roses for to keepe,
About hem made he a ditch deepe,
Right wonder large, and also brode,
Upon the whiche also stode
Of squared stone a sturdy wall,
Which on a cragge was founded all,
And right great thicknesse eke it bare,
About it was founded square
An hundred fadome on every side,
It was all liche long and wide,
Least any time it were assailed,
Full well about it was battailed,
And round environ eke were set
Full many a rich and faire tournet,
At every corner of this wall
Was set a tour full principall,
And everiche had without fable
A portcullise defensable
To keepe off enemies, and to greve,

That there hir force would preve.
And eke amidde this purprise
Was made a tour of great maistrise,
A fairer saugh no man with sight,
Large and wide, and of great might,
They dradde none assaut,
Of ginne, gonne, nor skaffaut,
The temprure of the mortere
Was made of liquour wonder dere
Of quicke lime persaunt and egre,
The which was tempred with vinegre.
The stone was hard of adamaunt,
Whereof they made the foundemaunt,
The toure was round made in compas,
In all this world no richer was,
Ne better ordained therewithall,
About the tour was made a wall,
So that betwixt that and the tour,
Roses were set of sweet savour,
With many roses that they bere,
And eke within the castle were
Springolds, gonnes, bowes, and archers,
And eke about at corners
Men seine over the wall stond
Great engines, who were nere hond,
And in the kernels here and there,
Of arblasters great plentie were.
None armour might hir stroke withstond,
It were folly to prease to hond;
Without the diche were listes made,
With wall battailed large and brade,
For men and horse should not attaine
Too nigh the diche over the plaine.
Thus Jelousie hath environ

Sette about his garnison
With walles round, and diche deepe,
Onely the roser for to keepe,
And Daunger early and late
The keyes kept of the utter gate,
The which opened toward the east,
And he had with him at least
Thirtie servants echone by name.
That other gate kept Shame,
Which opened, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south,
Sergeaunts assigned were her to
Full many, her will for to do.
Than Drede had in her baillie
The keeping of the constablerie,
Toward the north I understond,
That opened upon the left hond,
The which for nothing may be sure,
But if she doe busie cure
Early on morrow and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate:
Of every thing that she may see,
Drede is aferde, where so she bee,
For with a puffe of little wind,
Drede is astonied in her mind,
Therefore for stealing of the rose,
I rede her nat the yate unclose,
A foules flight would make her flee,
nd eke a shaddow if she it see.

Than Wicked Tongue full of envie,
With souldiours of Normandie,
As he that causeth all debate,
Was keeper of the fourth gate,

And also to the tother three,
He went full ofte for to see.
When his lotte was to walke a night,
His instrumentes would he dight,
For to blowe and make soune,
Ofter than he hath enchesoune,
And walken oft upon the wall,
Corners and wickettes over all,
Full narrow searchen and espie;
Though he nought fond, yet would he lie
Discordaunt ever fro armonie,
And dissoned from melodie,
Controve he would, and foule faile,
With hornepipes of Cornewaile.
In floytes made he discordaunce,
And in his musicke with mischaunce,
He would seine with notes newe,
That he fond no woman trew,
Ne that he saw never in his life,
Unto her husbond a trew wife:
Ne none so full of honeste,
That she nill laugh and merry be,
Whan that she heareth or may espie
A man speaken of lecherie.
Everiche of hem hath some vice,
One is dishonest, another is nice,
If one be full of villanie,
Another with a licorous eie,
If one be full of wantonnesse,
Another is a chideresse.
Thus Wicked tong, God yeve him shame,
Can put hem everichone in blame,
Without desert and causelesse,
He lieth, though they ben guiltlesse;

I have pity to seene the sorrow,
That waketh both even and morrow,
To innocents doth such grevaunce,
I pray God yeve him evill chaunce,
That he ever so busie is,
Of any woman to seine amis.
  Eke Jelousie God confound,
That hath made a toure so round,
And made about a garison,
To sette Bialacoil in prison,
The which is shette there in the tour,
Full long to holde there sojour,
There for live in pennaunce,
And for to do him more grevaunce,
Which hath ordained Jelousie,
An olde vecke for to spie
The manner of his governaunce,
The which devill in her enfaunce
Had learned of Loves art,
And of his plays tooke her part,
She was expert in his servise,
She knew each wrenche and every gise
Of love, and every wile,
It was hard her to beguile.
  Of Bialacoil she tooke aye hede,
That ever he liveth in wo and drede,
He kept him coy and eke privee,
Least in him she hadde see
Any folly countenance,
For she knew all the old daunce.
  And after this, whan Jelousie
Had Bialacoil in his baillie,
And shette him up that was so free,
For sure of him he would bee,

He trusteth sore in his castell,
The strong werke him liketh well,
He dradde nat that no glotons
Should steale his roses or bothoms,
The roses weren assured all
Defenced with the strong wall,
Now Jelousie full well may be
Of drede devoid in liberte,
Whether that he sleepe or wake,
For of his roses may none be take.

But I (alas) now mourne shall,
Because I was without the wall,
Full muche dole and mone I made,
Who had wist what wo I hade,
I trow he would have had pite,
Love too deare had solde me
The good that of his love had I,
I went about it all queintly,
But now through doubling of my paine
I see he woll it sell againe,
And me a new bargaine lere,
The which all out the more is dere,
For the sollace that I have lorne,
Than I had it never aforne;
Certaine I am full like indeed
To him that cast in earth his seed,
And hath joy of the new springing,
Whan it greeneth in the ginning,
And is also faire and fresh of flour,
Lustie to seene, swote of odour,
But ere he it in his sheves shere,
May fall a weather that shall it dere,
And make it to fade and fall,

The stalke, the greine, and floures all,
That to the tiller is fordone,
The hope that he had too soone:
I drede certaine that so fare I,
For hope and travaile sikerly
Ben me beraft all with a storme,
The floure nill seden of my corne,
For Love hath so avaunced me,
When I began my privite,
To Bialacoil all for to tell,
Whom I ne found froward ne fell,
But tooke agree all whole my play;
But Love is of so hard assay,
That all at ones he reved me,
Whan I weent best aboven to have be.
It is of Love, as of Fortune,
That chaungeth oft, and nill contune,
Which whylome woll of folke smile,
And glombe on hem another while,
Now friend, now foe, shalt her feele,
For a twinckling tourneth her wheele.
She can writhe her head away,
This is the concourse of her play,
She can areise that doeth mourne,
And whirle adoune, and overtourne
Who sitteth highest, but as her lust,
A foole is he that woll her trust,
For it is I that am come doun
Through charge and revolutioun,
Sith Bialacoil mote fro me twin,
Shette in her prison yonde within,
His absence at mine herte I fele,
For all my joy and all mine hele
Was in him and in the rose,

That but you will, which him doeth close,
Open, that I may him see,
Love woll not that I cured bee
Of the paines that I endure,
Nor of my cruell aventure.

Ah, Bialacoil mine owne dere,
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Keepe at least thine herte to me,
And suffer nat that it daunted be,
Ne let not Jealousie in his rage,
Putten thine heart in no servage,
Although he chastice thee without,
And make thy bodie unto him lout,
Have herte as hard as Diamaunt,
Stedfast, and naught pliaunt:
In prison though thy bodie bee
At large keepe thine herte free,
A true herte will not plie
For no manace that it may drie.
If Jelousie doeth thee paine,
Quite him his wile thus againe,
To venge thee at least in thought,
If other way thou maiest nought,
And in this wise subtelly
Worch, and winne the maistrie.
But yet I am in great affray,
Least thou doe nat as I say,
I drede thou canst me great maugre,
That thou emprisoned art for me,
But that nat for my trespas,
For through me never discovered was
Yet thing that ought be secre:
Well more annoie is in me,

[illegible]
For I endure more cruel [illegible]
Than any one [illegible]
That for the sorrow almost I [illegible]
Whan I remember me of [illegible]
Full nigh out of my witte I go.
  Inward mine herte I feele [illegible],
For comfortless the death I [illegible],
Owe I nat well to have distresse,
Whan false, through his [illegible],
And traitours, that [illegible],
To noien me so outrageous?
  Ah, Bialacoil full well I [illegible]
That they [illegible]
To make thee bonden to his [illegible],
And with hir cordes thee to [illegible]
Where so hem [illegible],
I drede they have thee [illegible]
Without comfort, the thought me [illegible]
This game would bring me to my death,
For if your good will I lese,
I mote be dead, I may not chese,
And if that thou foryete me,
Mine herte shall never in liking be,
Nor elswhere find sollace,
If I be put out of your grace,
As it shall never ben I hope,
Than should I fall in wanhope.
  Alas, in wanhope, nay parde,
For I woll never dispaired be;
If Hope me faile, than am I
Ungracious and unworthy;
In Hope I woll comforted be,
For Love, when he betaught her me,
Saied, that Hope where so I go,

Should aye be relees to my wo.
But what and she my bales bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in nothing full certaine,
Lovers she put in full great paine,
And maketh hem with wo to dele,
Her faire beheste deceiveth fele,
For she woll behote sikerly,
And failen after utterly.
Ah, that is a full noyous thing,
For many a lover in loving
Hangeth upon her, and trusteth fast,
Which lese hir travaile at the last.
Of thing to commen she wot right nought,
Therefore if it be wisely sought,
Her counsaile follie is to take,
For many times, when she woll make
A full good sillogisme, I drede,
That afterward there shall indede
Follow an evill conclusion,
This put me in confusion.
For many times I have it seene,
That many have beguiled beene,
For trust that they have set in hope,
Which fell hem afterward a slope.

But nathelesse yet gladly she would,
That he that woll him with her hold,
Had all times her purpose clere,
Without deceit any where,
That she desireth sikerly;
Whan I her blamed, I did folly;
But what availeth her good will,
Whan she ne may staunch my stound ill,
That helpeth little that she may do,

Or take behest unto myself
And hente derelide in no wise,
Without yifte to hire to pleasaunce
When hente unto deed semblaunce,
They doen a great contrary
Thus am I posted up and down
With dole, thought, and confusioun
Of my decease there is no ruthe,
Daunger and Shame me constraine
Drede also, and Jelousie,
And Wicked Tongues full of envie,
Of which the thirde and eke the ferde
Full oft me put in great manace
They have my joie fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they have beset
Fro me in prison wickedly,
Whom I love so entirely,
That it woll my bane be,
But I the sooner may him see.
And yet moreover worst of all,
There is set to keepe, foule her befall,
A rimpled vecke ferre ronne in rage,
Frouning and yellow in her visage,
Which in await lieth day and night,
That none of him may have a sight.

Now mote my sorrow enforced be,
Full sooth it is, that Love yafe me
Three wonder yeftes of his grace,
Which I have lorne, now in this place,
Sith they ne maie without drede
Helpen but little, who taketh hede:
For her availeth no Sweet Thought,
And Sweet Speech helpeth right nought,

The third was called Sweet Looking,
That now is lorne without lesing.
Yeftes were faire, but nat for thy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil loosed bee
To gone at large and to be free,
For him my life lieth all in dout,
But if he come the rather out.
Alas, I trow it woll nat beene,
For how should I evermore him seene?
He may nat out, and that is wrong,
Because the toure is so strong,
How should he out, or by whose prowesse
Of so strong a forteresse?
By me certaine it nill be do,
God wote I have no wit thereto,
But well I wote I was in rage,
When I to Love did homage;
Who was the cause (in soothfastnesse)
But her selfe dame Idlenesse?
Which me conveide through faire praiere
To enter into that faire vergere:
She was to blame me to leve,
The which now doeth me sore greve,
A fooles word is nought to trow,
Ne worth an apple for to low,
Men should hem snibbe bitterly,
At prime temps of his folly:
I was a foole, and she me leved,
Through whom I am right nought releved,
She accomplished all my will,
That now me greveth wonder ill.

Reason me saied what should fall,

A foole my selfe I may well call,
That love aside I had not laied,
And trowed that dame Reason saied.
Reason had both skill and right,
When she me blamed with all her might
To meddle of love, that hath me shent,
But certaine now I woll repent.

And should I repent? Nay parde,
A false traitour then should I be,
The devils engins would me take,
If I Love would forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly betray.
Should I at mischeefe hate him? nay,
Sith he now for his courtesie
Is in prison of Jelousie;
Courtesie certaine did he me,
So much, that it may not yolden be,
When he the haie passen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete,
Should I therefore conne him maugre?
Nay certainely, it shall nat be,
For Love shall never (yeve God will)
Here of me, through word or will,
Offence or complaint more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idlenesse:
For certes, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir courtesie.
There is not els, but suffer and thinke,
And waken whan I should winke,
Abide in hope, till Love through chaunce
Send me succour or allegeaunce,
Expectaunt aye till I may mete,
To getten mercie of that swete.

Whilome I thinke how Love to mee
Saied he would take at gree
My service, if unpatience
Caused me to doen offence:
He saied, "In thanke I shall it take,
And high maister eke thee make,
If wickednesse ne reve it thee,
But soone I trow that shall nat be."
These were his wordes by and by,
It seemed he loved me truely.
Now is there not but serve him wele,
If that I thinke his thanke to fele,
My good, mine harme, lithe hole in me,
In Love may no defaut be,
For true Love ne failed never man:
Soothly the faute mote needs than
As God forbide, be found in me,
And how it commeth, I cannot see.
Now let it gone as it may go,
Whether Love woll succour me or slo,
He may do hole on me his will,
I am so sore bound him till,
From his service I may not flene,
For life and death withouten wene
Is in his hond, I may nat chese,
He may me doe both winne and lese,
And sith so sore he doth me greve,
Yet if my lust he would acheve,
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I yeve no force what fell on me:
For though I die, as I mote nede,
I pray Love of his goodlyhede,
To Bialacoil doe gentlenesse,
For whom I live in such distresse,

That I mote dien for penaunce,
But first, without repentaunce,
I woll me confesse in good entent,
And make in hast my testament,
As lovers doen that feelen smart:
To Bialacoil leave I mine herte
All hole, without departing,
Or doublenesse of repenting.

COMENT RAISON VIENT A LAMANT.

Thus as I made my passage
In complaint, and in cruell rage,
And I not where to finde a leche,
That couth unto mine helping eche,
Suddainely againe comen doun
Out of her toure I saw Reasoun,
Discreet and wise, and full pleasaunt,
And of her port full avenaunt;
The right waie she tooke to me,
Which stood in gret perplexite
That was poshed in every side,
That I n'ist where I might abide,
Till she demurely sad of chere
Saied to me as she came nere,
" Mine owne friend, art thou greved,
How is this quarrell yet atcheved
Of Loves side? Anone me tell,
Hast thou not yet of love thy fill?
Art thou nat wearie of thy service
That thee hath in suche wise?
" What joy hast thou in thy loving?
Is it sweet or bitter thing?
Canst thou yet chese, let me see,
What best thy succour might bee?

"Thou servest a full noble lord,
That maketh thee thrall for thy reward,
Which aye reneweth thy tourment,
With folly so he hath thee blent;
Thou fell in mischeefe thilke day,
When thou diddest the sooth to say
Obeisaunce and eke homage
Thou wroughtest nothing as the sage;
When thou became his liege man,
Thou diddest a great follie than;
Thou wistest nat what fell thereto,
With what lord thou haddest to do,
If thou haddest him well know
Thou haddest nought be brought so low,
For if thou wiste what it were,
Thou n'oldest serve him halfe a yere,
Nat a weeke, nor halfe a day,
Ne yet an houre without delay:
Ne never yloved paramours,
His lordship is so full of shours:
Knowest him ought?"
L'AMAUNT. Ye, dame, parde.
RAISOUN. Nay nay. L'AMAUNT. Yes I.
RAISOUN. Wherefore let see.
L'AMAUNT. Of that he saied I should be
Glad to have such lord as he
And maister of such seignorie.
RAISOUN. Knowest him no more?
L'AMAUNT. Nay, certes, I,
Save that he yafe me rules there,
And went his way I nist where,
And I abode bound in ballaunce,
Lo there a noble cognisaunce.

The stalke, the greine, and floures all,
That to the tiller is fordone,
The hope that he had too soone:
I drede certaine that so fare I,
For hope and travaile sikerly
Ben me beraft all with a storme,
The floure nill seden of my corne,
For Love hath so avaunced me,
When I began my privite,
To Bialacoil all for to tell,
Whom I ne found froward ne fell,
But tooke agree all whole my play;
But Love is of so hard assay,
That all at ones he reved me,
Whan I weent best aboven to have be.
It is of Love, as of Fortune,
That chaungeth oft, and nill contune,
Which whylome woll of folke smile,
And glombe on hem another while,
Now friend, now foe, shalt her feele,
For a twinckling tourneth her wheele.
She can writhe her head away,
This is the concourse of her play,
She can areise that doeth mourne,
And whirle adoune, and overtourne
Who sitteth highest, but as her lust,
A foole is he that woll her trust,
For it is I that am come doun
Through charge and revolutioun,
Sith Bialacoil mote fro me twin,
Shette in her prison yonde within,
His absence at mine herte I fele,
For all my joy and all mine hele
Was in him and in the rose,

That but you will, which him doeth close,
Open, that I may him see,
Love woll not that I cured bee
Of the paines that I endure,
Nor of my cruell aventure.

Ah, Bialacoil mine owne dere,
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Keepe at least thine herte to me,
And suffer nat that it daunted be,
Ne let not Jealousie in his rage,
Putten thine heart in no servage,
Although he chastice thee without,
And make thy bodie unto him lout,
Have herte as hard as Diamaunt,
Stedfast, and naught pliaunt:
In prison though thy bodie bee
At large keepe thine herte free,
A true herte will not plie
For no manace that it may drie.
If Jelousie doeth thee paine,
Quite him his wile thus againe,
To venge thee at least in thought,
If other way thou maiest nought,
And in this wise subtelly
Worch, and winne the maistrie.
But yet I am in great affray,
Least thou doe nat as I say,
I drede thou canst me great maugre,
That thou emprisoned art for me,
But that nat for my trespas,
For through me never discovered was
Yet thing that ought be secre:
Well more annoie is in me,

Should aye be relees to my wo.
But what and she my bales bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in nothing full certaine,
Lovers she put in full great paine,
And maketh hem with wo to dele,
Her faire beheste deceiveth fele,
For she woll behote sikerly,
And failen after utterly.
Ah, that is a full noyous thing,
For many a lover in loving
Hangeth upon her, and trusteth fast,
Which lese hir travaile at the last.
Of thing to commen she wot right nought,
Therefore if it be wisely sought,
Her counsaile follie is to take,
For many times, when she woll make
A full good sillogisme, I drede,
That afterward there shall indede
Follow an evill conclusion,
This put me in confusion.
For many times I have it seene,
That many have beguiled beene,
For trust that they have set in hope,
Which fell hem afterward a slope.

But nathelesse yet gladly she would,
That he that woll him with her hold,
Had all times her purpose clere,
Without deceit any where,
That she desireth sikerly;
Whan I her blamed, I did folly;
But what availeth her good will,
Whan she ne may staunch my stound ill,
That helpeth little that she may do,

Or take behest unto my wo:
And heste certaine in no wise,
Without yfete is not to preise.
When heste and deed asunder vary,
They doen a great contrary;
Thus am I posted up and doun
With dole, thought, and confusioun,
Of my desease there is no number,
Daunger and Shame me encumber,
Drede also, and Jelousie,
And Wicked Tongue full of envie,
Of which the sharpe and cruell ire
Full oft me put in great mattire;
They have my joie fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they have beshet
Fro me in prison wickedly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it woll my bane bee,
But I the sooner may him see.
And yet moreover worst of all,
There is set to keepe, foule her befall,
A rimpled vecke ferre ronne in rage,
Frouning and yellow in her visage,
Which in await lieth day and night,
That none of him may have a sight.

Now mote my sorrow enforced be,
Full sooth it is, that Love yafe me
Three wonder yeftes of his grace,
Which I have lorne, now in this place,
Sith they ne maie without drede
Helpen but little, who taketh hede:
For her availeth no Sweet Thought,
And Sweet Speech helpeth right nought,

The third was called Sweet Looking,
That now is lorne without lesing.
Yeftes were faire, but nat for thy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil loosed bee
To gone at large and to be free,
For him my life lieth all in dout,
But if he come the rather out.
Alas, I trow it woll nat beene,
For how should I evermore him seene?
He may nat out, and that is wrong,
Because the toure is so strong,
How should he out, or by whose prowesse
Of so strong a forteresse?
By me certaine it nill be do,
God wote I have no wit thereto,
But well I wote I was in rage,
When I to Love did homage;
Who was the cause (in soothfastnesse)
But her selfe dame Idlenesse?
Which me conveide through faire praiere
To enter into that faire vergere:
She was to blame me to leve,
The which now doeth me sore greve,
A fooles word is nought to trow,
Ne worth an apple for to low,
Men should hem snibbe bitterly,
At prime temps of his folly:
I was a foole, and she me leved,
Through whom I am right nought releved,
She accomplished all my will,
That now me greveth wonder ill.

Reason me saied what should fall,

A foole my selfe I may well call,
That love aside I had not laied,
And trowed that dame Reason saied.
Reason had both skill and right,
When she me blamed with all her might
To meddle of love, that hath me shent,
But certaine now I woll repent.

And should I repent? Nay parde,
A false traitour then should I be,
The devils engins would me take,
If I Love would forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly betray.
Should I at mischeefe hate him? nay,
Sith he now for his courtesie
Is in prison of Jelousie;
Courtesie certaine did he me,
So much, that it may not yolden be,
When he the haie passen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete,
Should I therefore conne him maugre?
Nay certainely, it shall nat be,
For Love shall never (yeve God will)
Here of me, through word or will,
Offence or complaint more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idlenesse:
For certes, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir courtesie.
There is not els, but suffer and thinke,
And waken whan I should winke,
Abide in hope, till Love through chaunce
Send me succour or allegeaunce,
Expectaunt aye till I may mete,
To getten mercie of that swete.

Whilome I thinke how Love to mee
Saied he would take at gree
My service, if unpatience
Caused me to doen offence:
He saied, "In thanke I shall it take,
And high maister eke thee make,
If wickednesse ne reve it thee,
But soone I trow that shall nat be."
These were his wordes by and by,
It seemed he loved me truely.
Now is there not but serve him wele,
If that I thinke his thanke to fele,
My good, mine harme, lithe hole in me,
In Love may no defaut be,
For true Love ne failed never man:
Loothly the faute mote needs than
As God forbide, be found in me,
And how it commeth, I cannot see.
Now let it gone as it may go,
Whether Love woll succour me or slo,
He may do hole on me his will,
I am so sore bound him till,
From his service I may not flene,
For life and death withouten wene
Is in his hond, I may nat chese,
He may me doe both winne and lese,
And sith so sore he doth me greve,
Yet if my lust he would acheve,
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I yeve no force what fell on me:
For though I die, as I mote nede,
I pray Love of his goodlyhede,
To Bialacoil doe gentlenesse,
For whom I live in such distresse,

That I mote dien for penaunce,
But first, without repentaunce,
I woll me confesse in good entent,
And make in hast my testament,
As lovers doen that feelen smart:
To Bialacoil leave I mine herte
All hole, without departing,
Or doublenesse of repenting.

COMENT RAISON VIENT A LAMANT.

Thus as I made my passage
In complaint, and in cruell rage,
And I not where to finde a leche,
That couth unto mine helping eche,
Suddainely againe comen doun
Out of her toure I saw Reasoun,
Discreet and wise, and full pleasaunt,
And of her port full avenaunt;
The right waie she tooke to me,
Which stood in gret perplexite
That was poshed in every side,
That I n'ist where I might abide,
Till she demurely sad of chere
Saied to me as she came nere,
" Mine owne friend, art thou greved,
How is this quarrell yet atcheved
Of Loves side? Anone me tell,
Hast thou not yet of love thy fill?
Art thou nat wearie of thy service
That thee hath in suche wise?
" What joy hast thou in thy loving?
Is it sweet or bitter thing?
Canst thou yet chese, let me see,
What best thy succour might bee?

"Thou servest a full noble lord,
That maketh thee thrall for thy reward,
Which aye reneweth thy tourment,
With folly so he hath thee blent;
Thou fell in mischeefe thilke day,
When thou diddest the sooth to say
Obeisaunce and eke homage
Thou wroughtest nothing as the sage;
When thou became his liege man,
Thou diddest a great follie than;
Thou wistest nat what fell thereto,
With what lord thou haddest to do,
If thou haddest him well know
Thou haddest nought be brought so low,
For if thou wiste what it were,
Thou n'oldest serve him halfe a yere,
Nat a weeke, nor halfe a day,
Ne yet an houre without delay:
Ne never yloved paramours,
His lordship is so full of shours:
Knowest him ought?"
L'AMAUNT. Ye, dame, parde.
RAISOUN. Nay nay. L'AMAUNT. Yes I.
RAISOUN. Wherefore let see.
L'AMAUNT. Of that he saied I should be
Glad to have such lord as he
And maister of such seignorie.
RAISOUN. Knowest him no more?
L'AMAUNT. Nay, certes, I,
Save that he yafe me rules there,
And went his way I nist where,
And I abode bound in ballaunce,
Lo there a noble cognisaunce.

RAISOUN.

But I woll that thou know him now
Ginning and end, sithe that thou
Art so anguishous and mate,
Disfigured out of astate,
There may no wreche have more of wo,
Ne caitife none enduren so,
It were to every man sitting,
Of his lord have knowledging:
For if thou knew him out of dout,
Lightly thou shouldest scapen out
Of thy prison that marreth thee.

LAMAUNT.

Yea dame sith my lord is hee,
And I his man made with mine hond,
I would right faine understond
To knowe of what kind he be,
If any would enforme me.

RAISOUN.

I would (saied Reason) thee lere,
Sith thou to learne hast such desire,
And shewe thee withouten fable
A thing that is not demonstrable;
Thou shalt withouten science,
And know withouten experience
The thing that may not knowen bee,
Ne wist ne sheweth in no degree,
Thou maiest the sooth of it not witten,
Though in thee it were written,
Thou shalt not knowe thereof more,
While thou art ruled by his lore,

But unto him that love woll flie,
The knotte may unlosed be,
Which hath to thee, as it is found,
So long to knitte and not unbound,
Now set well thine entention,
To heare of love the description.

Love it is an hatefull pees,
A free acquitaunce without relees,
And through the fret full of falshede,
A sikernesse all set in drede,
In herte is a despairing hope,
And full of hope it is wanhope,
Wise woodnesse, and void reasoun,
A swete perill in to droun,
An heavie burthen light to beare,
A wicked wawe away to weare.
It is Carybdis perillous,
Disagreeable and gracious,
It is discordaunce that can accord,
And accordaunce to discord,
It is conning without science,
Wisedome without sapience,
Witte without discretion,
Havoire without possession;
It is like heale and hole sickenesse,
A trust drowned and dronkennesse,
And health full of maladie,
And charitie full of envie,
And anger full of aboundance,
And a greedie suffisaunce,
Delight right full of heavinesse,
And dreried full of gladnesse,
Bitter sweetnesse and sweet errour,

Right evill savoured good savour,
Sin that pardon hath within,
And pardon spotted without sin,
A paine also it is joyous,
And fellonie right pitous,
Also play that selde is stable,
And stedfast right mevable,
A strength weiked to stond upright,
And feeblenesse full of might,
Witte unavised, sage follie,
And joy full of tourmentrie,
A laughter it is weeping aie,
Rest that travaileth night and daie,
Also a sweete Hell it is,
And a sorrowfull Paradis,
A pleasaunt gaile and easie prisoun,
And full of froste summer seasoun,
Prime temps full of frostes white,
And May devoid of all delite,
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene,
And new fruit filled with winter tene,
It is a slowe may nat forbeare,
Ragges ribaned with gold to weare,
For also well woll love be sette
Under ragges as rich rochette,
And eke as well by amorettes
In mourning blacke, as bright burnettes,
For none is of so mokell prise,
Ne no man founden so wise,
Ne none so high of parage,
Ne no man found of witte so sage,
No man so hardie ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mokell might,
None so fulfilled of bounte,

That he with love may daunted be;
All the worlde holdeth this way,
Love maketh all to gone misway,
But it be they of evill life,
Whom genius cursed man and wife,
That wrongly werke againe nature,
None such I love, ne have no cure
Of such as loves servaunts beene,
And woll nat by my counsaile fleene,
For I ne preise that loving,
Wherthrough man at the last ending
Shall call hem wretches full of wo,
Love greveth hem and shendeth so;
But if thou wolt well love eschew,
For to escape out of his mew,
And make all whole the sorrow to slake,
No better counsaile maiest thou take,
Than thinke to fleen well ywis,
May nought helpe els: for wite thou this,
If thou flye it, it shall flye thee,
Follow it, and followen shall it thee."

LAMAUNT.

When I had heard Reason sain,
Whiche had spilt her speech in vain:
"Dame" (sayd I) "I dare well say
Of this avaunt me well I may
That from your schoole so deviaunt
I am, that never the more avaunt
Right nought am I through your doctrine,
I dull under your discipline,
I wote no more than wist ever
To me so contrarie and so fer
Is everie thing that ye me lere,

And yet I can it all by parcuere:
Mine herte foryeteth thereof right nought,
It is so writen in my thought,
And deepe graven it is so tender
That all by herte I can it render,
And rede it over communely,
But to my selfe lewdest am I.

But sith ye love discriven so
And lacke and preise it bothe two
Defineth it into this letter,
That I may thinke on it the better:
For I heard never defined here,
And wilfully I would it lere."
" If love be searched well and sought
It is a sickenesse of the thought
Annexed and knedde betwixt tweine,
With male and female with o cheine,
So freely that bindeth, yet they n'ill twinne,
Wheder so thereof they lese or winne:
The roote springeth through hot brenning
Into disordinate desiring,
For to kissen and embrace,
And at hir lust them to solace,
Of other thing love retcheth nought
But setteth hir herte and all hir thought,
More for delectatioun
Than any procreatioun
Of other fruit by engendrure:
Which love, to God is not pleasure,
For of hir body fruit to get
They yeve no force, they are so set
Upon delight to play in fere.
And some have also this manere,

To fainen hem for love seke,
Such love I preise not at a leke.
For paramours they doe but faine,
To love truely they disdaine,
They falsen ladies traitorously,
And swerne hem othes utterly,
With many a leasing, and many a fable,
And all the finden deceivable.
" And when they han hir lust getten
The hote ernes they all foryetten;
Women the harme buyen full sore:
But men thus thinken evermore,
The lasse harme is, so mote I thee,
Deceive them, than deceived be.
And namely where they ne may
Finde none other meane way:
For I wote well in soothfastnesse,
That who doeth now his businesse
With any woman for to dele,
For any lust that he may fele,
But if it be for engendrure,
He doth trespasse I you ensure:
For he should setten all his will
To getten a likely thing him till,
And to sustaine, if he might,
And keepe forth by Kindes right
His owne likenesse and semblable:
For because all is corrumpable
And faile should succession
Ne were there generation,
Our sectes sterne for to save,
Whan father or mother arn in grave,
Her children should, whan they been dead,
Full diligent been in hir stead

To use that worke on such a wise,
That one may through another rise.
Therefore set Kinde therein delight,
For men therein should hem delight,
And of that deede be not erke,
But ofte sithes haunt that werke:
For none would draw thereof a draught
Ne were delight, which hath hem caught,
This had subtill dame Nature:
For none goeth right I thee ensure
Ne hath entent hoole ne perfite,
For hir desire is for delite,
The which fortened crease and eke
The play of love, for oft seeke
And thrall hem selfe they be so nice
Unto the prince of everie vice:
For of each sinne it is the roote
Unlefull lust, though it be soote,
And of all evill the racine,
As Tullius can determine,
Which in his time was full sage,
In a booke he made of age,
Where that more he praiseth Elde
Though he be crooked and unwelde,
And more of commendatioun,
Than youth in his discriptioun:
For youth set bothe man and wife
In all perill of soule and life,
And perill is, but men have grace.
The perill of youth for to pace,
Without any death or distresse,
It is so full of wildnesse,
So oft it doeth shame and domage
To him or to his linage,

It leadeth man, now up now doun
In mokell dissolutioun,
And maketh him love evill companie,
And lead his life disrulilie,
And halt him payd with none estate
Within himselfe in such debate,
He chaungeth purpose and entent,
And yalte into some covent,
To liven after hir emprise,
And leeseth freedome and fraunchise,
That nature in him had set,
The which againe he may not get,
If he there make his mansion,
For to abide profession.
Though for a time his herte absent
It may not faile, he shall repent,
And eke abide thilke day,
To leave his abite, and gone his way,
And leaseth his worship and his name,
And dare not come againe for shame,
But all his life he doth so mourne,
Because he dare not home retourne,
Freedome of kinde so lost hath he
That never may recured be,
But that if God him graunt grace
That he may, er he hence pace,
Conteine under obedience
Through the vertue of patience.
For youth set man in all follie,
In unthrift and in ribaudrie,
In lecherie, and in outrage,
So oft it chaungeth of courage.
Youth ginneth oft suche bargaine,
That may not ende without paine.

In great perill is set youthhede
Delight so doeth his bridell lede,
Delight this hangeth, drede thee nought,
Both mannes bodie and his thought,
Onely through youthes chambere,
That to doen evill is customere,
And of naught else taketh hede,
But onely folkes for to lede
Into disport and wildenesse,
So is froward from sadnesse,
But elde draweth hem therefro,
Who wote it not, he may well go,
And mo of them, that now arn old,
That whilom youth had in hold,
Which yet remembreth of tender age
How it him brought in many a rage,
And many a follie therein wrought:
But now that elde hath him through sought
They repent hem of hir follie,
That youth hem put in jeopardie,
In perill and in muche woe,
And made hem oft amisse to doe,
And sewen evill companie
Riot and advoutrie.

But elde gan againe restraine
From such follie, and refraine
And set men by her ordinaunce,
In good rule and governaunce,
But evil she spendeth her servise,
For no man woll her love, neither preise,
She is hated, this wote I wele,
Her acquaintance would no man fele,
Ne han of elde companie,

Men hate to be of her alie,
For no man would becommen old,
Ne die, when he is young and bold,
And elde marvaileth right greatly,
When they remember hem inwardly
Of many a perillous emprise
Which that they wrought in sundry wise,
However they might without blame
Escape awaie without shame,
In youth without domage
Or reprefe of her linage,
Losse of member, shedding of blood,
Perill of death, or losse of good.
Wost thou nat where youth abit,
That men so preisen in hir wit?
With Delight she halt sojour,
For both they dwellen in o tour,
As long as youth is in season,
They dwellen in one mansion:
Delight, of youth woll have servise
To doe what so he woll devise,
And youth is readie evermore
For to obey, for smert or sore,
Unto Delight, and him to yeve
Her servise, while that she may live.
" Where elde abitte, I woll thee tell
Shortly, and no while dwell,
For thider behoveth thee to go
If death in youth thee not slo:
Of this journey thou mayst not faile,
With her Labour and Travaile,
Lodged been with Sorrow and Wo,
That never out of her court go:
Paine and Distresse, Sickenesse, and Ire,

And Melancholly that angrie sire,
Ben of her paleis senatours,
Groning and grutching, her herbegeours,
The day and night her to tourment
With cruell death they her present,
And tellen her erlich and late
That Death stondeth armed at her gate:
Than bring they to her remembraunce
The folly deedes of her enfaunce,
Which causen her to mourne in wo
That youth hath her beguiled so
Which sodainly away is hasted,
She weeped the time that she hath wasted,
Complaining of the preteritte,
And the present, that nat abitte,
And of her olde vanitee
That but aforne her she may see,
In the future some succour,
To leggen her of her dolour
To graunt her time of repentaunce,
For her sinnes to doe penaunce,
And at the last so her governe
To winne the joy that is eterne,
Fro which goe backeward youth he made
In vanitie to drowne and wade,
For present time abideth nought,
It is more swift than any thought,
So little while it doth endure
That there n'is compte ne measure.
" But how that ever the game go
Who list to love joy and mirth also
Of love, be it he or she,
Hie or lowe who it be,
In fruite they should hem delite,

Hir part they may not else quite,
To save hem selfe in honeste,
And yet full many one I see
Of women, soothly for to saine,
That desire and would faine
The play of love, they be so wilde
And not covet to go with childe:
And if with childe they be perchaunce,
They woll it hold a great mischaunce,
But whatsoever woe they fele,
They woll not plaine, but concele,
But if it be any foole or nice,
In whome that shame hath no justice,
For to delight each one they draw,
That haunt this worke both hie and law,
Save such that arn worth right nought,
That for money woll be bought,
Such love I preise in no wise,
Whan it is given for covetise;
I praise no woman, though she be wood
That yeveth her selfe for any good:
For little should a manne tell
Of her, that will her bodie sell,
Be she maide, be she wife,
That quicke woll sell her by her life,
How faire chere that ever she make,
He is a wretch I undertake
That loved such one, for sweete or soure,
Though she him called her paramoure,
And laugheth on him, and maketh him feast,
For certainly no suche beast
To be loved is not worthie
Or beare the name of Druerie,
None should her please, but he wer wood,

That woll dispoile him of his good:
Yet nathelesse I woll not say
That she for solace and for play,
May a jewell or other thing
Take of her loves free yeving:
But that she aske it in no wise,
For drede of shame or covetise.
And she of hers may him certaine
Without slaunder yeven againe,
And joyne hir hearts togither so
In love, and take and yeve also.
Trow not that I woll hem twinne,
When in hir love there is no sinne,
I woll that they together go,
And done all that they han ado,
As curtes should and debonaire,
And in hir love beren hem faire,
Without vice, both he and she,
So that alway in honeste,
Fro folly Love to keepe hem clere
That brenneth hertes with his fere,
And that hir love in any wise,
Be devoide of covetise.
Good love should engendred be
Of true herte, just, and secree,
And not of such as set hir thought
To have hir lust, and else nought:
So are they caught in Loves lace,
Truly for bodily solace,
Fleshly delighte is so present
With thee, that set all thine entent,
Without more, what should I glose,
For to get and have the rose,
Which maketh thee so mate and wood

That thou desirest none other good;
But thou art not an inch the nerre,
But ever abidest in sorrow and werre,
As in thy face it is seene,
It maketh thee both pale and leene,
Thy might, thy vertue goeth away:
A sorry guest (in good fay)
Thou harbourest in thine inne
The god of love whan thou let inne:
Wherefore I read thou shette him out,
Or he shall greve thee out of dout,
For to thy profite it woll tourne,
If he no more with thee sojourne.
In great mischiefe and sorrow sonken,
Ben hertes, that of love arn dronken,
As thou peraventure knowen shall,
When thou hast lost the time all,
And spent thy thought in idlenesse,
In waste, and wofull lustinesse:
If thou maiest live the time to see
Of love for to delivered bee,
Thy time thou shalt beweepe sore
The which never thou mayest restore:
For time lost, as men may see,
For nothing may recovered bee,
And if thou scape, yet at last,
Fro Love that hath thee so fast
Knitte and bounden in his lace,
Certaine I hold it but a grace,
For many one as it is seine
Have lost, and spent also in veine
In his servise without succour
Bodie and soule, good, and treasour,
Wit, and strength, and eke richesse,

Of which they had never redresse.

LAMANT.

Thus taught and preached hath Reason,
But Love spilte her sermon,
That was so imped in my thought,
That her doctrine I set at nought,
And yet ne sayd she never a dele,
That I ne understood it wele,
Word by word the matter all,
But unto Love I was so thrall,
Which calleth over all his praie,
He chaseth so my thought aie,
And holdeth mine herte under his sele,
As trustie and true as any stele:
So that no devotion
Ne had I in the sermon
Of dame Reason, ne of her rede
I tooke no sojour in mine hede.
For all yede out at one ere
That in that other she did lere,
Fully on me she lost her lore
Her speech me greeved wonder sore.

That unto her for ire I said
For anger, as I did abraid:
" Dame, and is it your will algate,
That I not love, but that I hate
All men, as ye me teach,
For if I doe after your speach,
Sith that you seine love is not good,
Than must I nedes say with mood
If I it lefe, in hatred aie
Liven, and voide love awaie,

From me a sinfull wretch,
Hated of all that tetch,
I may not go none other gate,
For either must I love or hate,
And if I hate men of new,
More than love it woll me rew,
As by your preching seemeth mee,
For love nothing ne praiseth thee:
Ye yeve good counsaile sikerly
That precheth me all day, that I
Should not loves lore alowe,
He were a foole woulde you not trowe?
In speech also ye han me taught,
Another love that knowne is naught
Which I have heard you not repreve,
To love each other by your leve,
If ye would diffine it mee,
I would gladly here to see,
At the least if I may lere
Of sundrie loves the manere."

RAISON.

" Certes friend, a foole art thou
Whan that thou nothing wilt allow
That I for thy profite say:
Yet woll I say thee more in fay,
For I am readie at the leest,
To accomplish thy request,
But I not where it woll availe,
In vaine peraventure I shall travaile:
Love there is in sundrie wise,
As I shall thee here devise.
" For some love lefull is and good,
I meane not that which maketh thee wood,

And bringeth thee in many a fitte,
And ravisheth fro thee all thy witte,
It is so marvailous and queint,
With such love be no more aquaint.

COMMENT RAISON DIFFINIST AUNSEIN.

" Love of friendship also there is
Which maketh no man done amis,
Of will knitte betwixt two,
That woll not breake for wele ne wo,
Which long is likely to contune,
Whan will and goods been in commune,
Grounded by Gods ordinaunce,
Hoole without discordaunce,
With hem holding commaunce
Of all her good in charite,
That there be none exceptioun,
Through chaunging of ententioun,
That each helpe other at her nede,
And wisely hele both word and dede,
True of meaning, devoide of slouth,
For wit is nought without trouth:
So that the tone dare all his thought
Saine to his friend, and spare nought,
As to himselfe without dreding,
To be discovered by wreiyng,
For glad is that conjunction,
Whan there is none suspection,
Whom they would prove
That true and perfite weren in love:
For no man may be amiable,
But if he be so firme and stable,
That fortune change him not ne blinde,
But that his friend alway him finde,

Both poore and riche in o state:
For if his friend through any gate,
Woll complaine of his poverte,
He should not bide so long, till he
Of his helping him require,
For good deed done through praiere
Is sold and bought too deere ywis
To herte that of great valour is.
For herte fulfilled of gentlenesse,
Can evill demeane his distresse.
And man that worthy is of name,
To asken often hath great shame.
" A good man brenneth in his thought,
For shame when he asketh ought,
He hath great thought, and dredeth aie
For his disease when he shall praie
His friend, least that he warned be
Till that he preve his stabilitie:
But when that he hath founden one
That trustie is and true as stone,
And assayed him at all,
And found him stedfast as a wall,
And of his friendship be certaine,
He shall him shew both joy and paine,
And all that he dare thinke or say,
Without shame, as he well may,
For how should he ashamed be,
Of such one as I told thee?
For whan he wote his secret thought,
The third shall know thereof right nought,
For twey in number is bet than three,
In everie counsaile and secree:
Repreve he dredeth never a dele,
Who that beset his wordes wele,

For everie wise man out of drede,
Can keepe his tongue till he see nede.
" And fooles cannot hold hir tongue,
A fooles bell is soone ronge,
Yet shall a true friend doe more
To helpe his fellow of his sore,
And succour him whan he hath need
In all that he may done indeed,
And gladder that he him pleaseth
Than his felowe that he easeth,
And if he doe not his request,
He shall as muche him molest
As his felowe, for that he
May not fulfill his volunte
Fully, as he hath required;
If both the hertes love hath fired
Joy and woe they shall depart,
And take evenly each his part,
Halfe his annoy he shall have aie,
And comforte what that he may,
And of this blisse part shall he,
If love woll departed be.

And whilom of this unitie
Spake Tullius in a ditie,
And should maken his request
Unto his friend, that is honest,
And he goodly should it fulfill,
But it the more were out of skill,
And otherwise not graunt thereto,
Except onely in causes two.
" If men his friend to death would drive
Let him be busie to save his live.
" Also if men wollen hem assaile,

Of his worship to make him faile
And hindren him of his renoun,
Let him with full ententioun,
His dever done in each degree
That his friend ne shamed be.
" In this two case with his might,
Taking no keepe to skill nor right,
As farre as love may him excuse,
This ought no manne to refuse.
" This love that I have told to thee
Is nothing contrarie to mee,
This woll I that thou follow wele,
And leave the other everie dele,
This love to vertue all attendeth,
The tother fooles blent and shendeth.
" Another love also there is,
That is contrarie unto this,
Which desire is so constrained
That is but will fained;
Away fro trouth it doth so varie
That to good love it is contrarie;
For it maymeth in many wise
Sicke hertes with covetise;
All in winning and in profite,
Such love setteth his delite:
This love so hangeth in balaunce
That if it lese his hope perchaunce,
Of lucre, that he is set upon,
It woll faile, and quench anon,
For no man may be amorous,
Ne in his living vertuous,
But he love more in mood
Men for hem selfe than for hir good:
For love that profite doth abide,

Is false, and hideth not in no tide.
Love commeth of dame Fortune,
That little while woll contune,
For it shall chaungen wonders soone,
And take eclips as the Moone
Whan she is from us let
Through Earth, that betwixt is set
The Sunne and her, as it may fall,
Be it in partie, or in all;
The shadow maketh her beames merke,
And her hornes to shew derke,
That part where she hath lost her light
Of Phebus fully, and the sight,
Till whan the shadow is overpast,
She is enlumined againe as fast,
Through the brightnesse of the sun beames
That yeveth to her againe her leames:
That love is right of such nature,
Now is faire, and now obscure,
Now bright, now clipsy of manere,
And whilom dimme, and whilom clere,
Assoone as poverte ginneth take,
With mantell and weedes blake
Hideth of love the light away,
That into night it tourneth day,
It may not see richesse shine,
Till the blacke shadowes fine,
For whan richesse shineth bright
Love recovereth ayen his light,
And whan it faileth, he woll flit,
And as she greeveth, so greeveth it.
" Of this love heare what I saie:
The riche men are loved aie,
And namely tho that sparand beene,

That woll not wash hir hertes cleene
Of the filth, nor of the vice
Of greedy brenning avarice.
" The rich man full fond is ywis,
That weneth that he loved is,
If that his herte it understood,
It is not he, it is his good,
He may well weten in his thought,
His good is loved, and he right nought:
For if he be a niggard eke,
Men would not set by him a leke,
But haten him, this is the sooth,
Lo what profite his cattell dooth,
Of every man that may him see,
It getteth him nought but enmitee:
But he amend himselfe of that vice,
And know himselfe, he is not wise.
" Certes he should aye friendly be,
To get him love also been free,
Or else he is not wise ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage.
That he not loveth, his deede proveth,
Whan he his richesse so well loveth,
That he woll hide it aie and spare,
His poore friends seene forfare
To keepen aie his purpose
Till for drede his eyen close,
And till a wicked death him take
Him had lever asunder shake,
And let all his limmes asunder rive,
Than leave his richesse in his live;
He thinketh to part it with no man,
Certaine no love is in him than:
How should love with him be,

Whan in his herte is no pite?
That he trespasseth well I wate,
For each man knoweth his estate,
For well him ought to be reproved
That loveth nought, ne is not loved.
" But sith we arn to Fortune comen,
And hath our sermon of her nomen,
A wonder will I tell thee now,
Thou hardest never such one I trow;
I n'ot where thou me leven shall,
Though soothfastnesse it be all,
As it is written, and is sooth
That unto men more profite dooth
The froward Fortune and contraire,
Than the swote and debonaire:
And if they thinke it is doutable,
It is through argument provable,
For the debonaire and soft
Falseth and beguileth oft,
For lich a mother she can cherish
And milken as doth a norice,
And of her good to him deles
And yeveth him part of her jeweles,
With great riches and dignitie,
And hem she hoteth stabilitie,
In state that is not stable,
But changing aie and variable,
And feedeth him with glorie vaine,
And worldly blisse none certaine,
Whan she him setteth on her whele,
Than wene they to be right wele,
And in so stable state withall
That never they wene for to fall,
And when they set so high to be,

They wene to have in certainte
Of heartly friendes to great numbre,
That nothing might hir state encombre,
They trust hem so on everie side,
Wening with hem they would abide,
In everie perill and mischaunce
Without chaunge or variaunce,
Both of cattell and of good,
And also for to spend hir blood,
And all hir members for to spill
Onely to fulfill hir will,
They maken it whole in many wise
And hoten hem hir full servise
How sore that it doe hem smert,
Into hir very naked shert,
Herte and also hole they yeve,
For the time that they may live,
So that with hir flatterie,
They maken fooles glorifie
Of hir wordes speaking,
And han chere of a rejoysing,
And trow them as the Evangile,
And it is all falshede and gile,
As they shall afterward see,
Whan they arn full in poverte,
And ben of good and cattell bare,
Than should they seene who friendes ware,
For of an hundred certainly,
Nor of a thousand full scarcely,
Ne shall they finde unnethes one,
Whan povertie is commen upon.
" For thus Fortune that I of tell,
With men whan her lust to dwell,
Maketh hem to lese hir conisaunce,

And nourisheth hem in ignoraunce.
" But froward Fortune and perverse,
When high estates she doth reverse,
And maketh hem to tumble doune
Off her whele with sodaine tourne,
And from her richesse doth hem flie,
And plungeth hem in povertie,
As a stepmother envious,
And layeth a plaister dolorous,
Unto hir hertes wounded egre,
Which is not tempered with vinegre,
But with povertie and indigence,
For to shew by experience,
That she is Fortune verilie
In whome no man should affie,
Nor in her yeftes have fiaunce,
She is so full of variaunce.
" Thus can she maken hye and lowe,
Whan they from richesse arn throwe,
Fully to knowen without were
Friend of effect, and friend of chere,
And which in love weren true and stable,
And which also weren variable,
After Fortune hir goddesse,
In povertie, either in richesse,
For all that yeveth here out of drede,
Unhappe beareth it indeede,
For infortune let not one
Of friendes, whan Fortune is gone,
I meane tho friendes that woll flie
Anone as entreth poverte,
And yet they woll not leave hem so,
But in each place where they go
They call hem wretch, scorne and blame,

And of hir mishappe hem diffame,
And namely such as in richesse,
Pretendeth most of stablenesse
Whan that they saw hem set on loft,
And weren of hem succoured oft,
And most yholpe in all hir need:
But now they take no maner heed,
But saine in voice of flatterie,
That now appeareth hir follie,
Over all where so they fare,
And sing, Go farewell felde fare.
" All such friendes I beshrew,
For of true there be too few,
But soothfast friendes, what so betide,
In every fortune wollen abide,
They han hir hertes in such noblesse
That they nill love for no richesse,
Nor for that Fortune may hem send
They wollen hem succour and defend,
And chaunge for softe ne for sore;
For who his friend loveth evermore
Though men draw sword him to slo,
He may not hew hir love a two:
But in case that I shall say,
For pride and ire lese it he may,
And for reproove by nicete,
And discovering of privite,
With tongue wounding, as felon,
Through venemous detraction.
" Friend in this case will gone his way,
For nothing grieve him more ne may,
And for nought else woll he fle,
If that he love in stabilitie.
And certaine he is well begone

Among a thousand that findeth one:
For there may be no richesse,
Ayenst friendship of worthinesse,
For it ne may so high attaine,
As may the valour, sooth to saine,
Of him that loveth true and well.
Friendship is more than is cattell,
For friend in court aie better is
Than penny in purse certis,
And Fortune mis-happing,
Whan upon men she is fabling,
Through misturning of her chaunce,
And cast hem out of balaunce.
" She maketh through her adversite
Men full clerely for to see
Him that is friend in existence
From him that is by appearence:
For infortune maketh anone,
To know thy friendes fro thy fone,
By experience, right as it is,
The which is more to praise ywis,
Than in much richesse and treasour,
For more deepe profite and valour,
Povertie, and such adversitie
Before, than doth prosperitie,
For that one yeveth conisaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce.
" And thus in povertie is indeed
Trouth declared fro falshede,
For faint friendes it woll declare,
And true also, what way they fare.
For whan he was in his richesse,
These friendes full of doublenesse
Offred him in many wise

Herte and body, and service,
What wold he than have you to have bought,
To knowen openly hir thought,
That he now hath so clerely seen?
The lasse beguiled he should have been,
And he had than perceived it,
But richesse n'old not let him wit:
Well more avauntage doeth him than,
Sith that he maketh him a wise man,
The great mischief that he perceiveth
Than doeth richesse that him deceiveth:
Richesse rich ne maketh nought
Him that on treasour set his thought,
For richesse stont in suffisaunce,
And nothing in aboundaunce:
For suffisaunce all onely
Maketh menne to live richly.

For he that hath mitches tweine,
Ne value in his demeine,
Liveth more at ease, and more is rich,
Than doeth he that is chich,
And in his barne hath sooth to saine,
An hundred mavis of wheat graine,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of gold many besaunt:
For in getting he hath such wo,
And in the keeping drede also,
And set evermore his businesse
For to encrease, and not to lesse,
For to augment and multiply,
And though on heapes that lye him by,
Yet never shall make his richesse,
Asseth unto his greedinesse:

But the poore that retcheth nought,
Save of his livelode in his thought,
Which that he getteth with his travaile,
He dredeth nought that it shall faile,
Though he have little worldes good,
Meate and drinke, and easie food,
Upon his travaile and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing,
Or if in sickenesse that he fall,
And loath meat and drinke withall,
Though he have not his meat to buy,
He shall bethinke him hastely,
To put him out of all daungere,
That he of meat hath no mistere,
Or that he may with little eke
Be founden, while that he is seke,
Or that men shull him berne in hast,
To live till his sickenesse be past,
To some maisondewe beside,
He cast nought what shall him betide,
He thinketh nought that ever he shall
Into any sickenesse fall.

And though it fall, as it may be,
That all betime spare shall he
As mokell as shall to him suffice,
While he is sicke in any wise,
He doeth for that he woll be
Content with his poverte
Without neede of any man,
So much in little have he can,
He is apaide with his fortune,
And for he nill be importune
Unto no wight, ne onerous,

Nor of hir goodnesse covetous:
Therefore he spareth, it may well been,
His poore estate for to susteen.

Or if him lust not for to spare,
But suffereth forth, as not yet ware,
At last it happeneth, as it may
Right unto his laste day,
And take the world as it would be:
For ever in herte thinketh he
The sooner that Death him slo,
To paradise the sooner go
He shall, there for to live in blisse
Where that he shall no good misse:
Thider he hopeth God shall him send
After this wretched lives end.
Pythagoras himselfe rehearses
In a booke that the Golde Verses
Is cleped, for the nobilite
Of the honourable dite:
'Than whan thou goest thy body fro,
Free in the ayre thou shalt up go
And leaven all humanitie,
And purely live in deitie,
He is a foole withouten were
That troweth have his countrey here.'
"In yearth is not our countrey,
That may these clarkes seine and sey
In Boece of Consolation
Where it is maked mention
Of our countrey plaine at the eie,
By teaching of philosophie,
Where lewd men might lere wit,
Who so that would translaten it.

If he be such that can well live
After his rent, may him yeve,
And not desireth more to have,
Than may fro povertie him save.
A wise man saied, as we may seen,
Is no man wretched, but he it ween,
Be he king, knight, or ribaude,
And many a ribaud is merrie and baude,
That swinketh, and beareth both day and night
Many a burthen of great might,
The which doeth him lasse offence,'
For he suffreth in patience:
They laugh and daunce, trippe and sing,
And lay nought up for hir living,
But in the taverne all dispendeth
The winning that God hem sendeth;
Than goeth he fardels for to beare,
With as good chere as he did eare;
To swinke and travaile he not faineth,
For to robben he disdaineth,
But right anon, after his swinke,
He goeth to taverne for to drinke:
All these are rich in aboundance,
That can thus have suffisance
Well more than can an usurere,
As God well knoweth, without were.
For an usurer, so God me see,
Shall never for richesse riche bee,
But evermore poore and indigent,
Scarce, and greedy in his entent.
" For sooth it is, whom it displease,
There may no marchaunt live at ease,
His herte in such a were is set
That it quicke brenneth to get,

Ne never shall, though he hath getten,
Though he have gould in garners yeten,
For to be needy he dredeth sore:
Wherefore to getten more and more
He set his herte and his desire;
So hote he brenneth in the fire
Of covetise, that maketh him wood
To purchase other mennes good;
He underfongeth a great paine,
That undertaketh to drinke up Saine:
For the more he drinketh aie
The more he leaveth, the sooth to say:
Thus is thurst of false getting,
That last ever in coveting,
And the anguish and distresse
With the fire of greedinesse;
She fighteth with him aie, and striveth,
That his herte asunder riveth,
Such greedinesse him assaileth,
That when he most hath, most he faileth.
" Phisitions and advocates
Gone right by the same yates,
They sell hir science for winning,
And haunt hir craft for great getting:
Hir winning is of such sweetnesse,
That if a man fall in sicknesse,
They are full glad, for hir encrease:
For by hir will, without lease,
Everich man shoulde be seeke,
And though they die, they set not a leeke;
After whan they the gould have take,
Full little care of hem they make;
They would that fortie were sicke at ones,
Yea two hundred, in flesh and bones,

And yet two thousand, as I gesse,
For to encreasen hir richesse.
"They woll not worchen in no wise,
But for lucre and covetise,
For physicke ginneth first by (phy)
The phisition also soothly,
And sithen it goeth fro fie to fie,
To trust on hem it is follie,
For they n'ill in no manner gree,
Doe right nought for charitee.
Eke in the same sect are set
All tho that preachen for to get
Worships, honour, and richesse.
Hir hertes arn in great distresse,
That folke live not holily,
But aboven all specially,
Such as preachen vaine glorie
And toward God have no memorie,
But forth as ipocrites trace,
And to hir soules death purchace
And outward shewing holynesse,
Though they be full of cursednesse,
Nor lyche to the apostles twelve,
They deceive other and hem selve:
Beguiled is the guiler than,
For preaching of a cursed man
Though to other may profite
Himself it availeth not a mite:
For oft good predicatioun
Commeth of evil ententioun:
To him not vaileth his preaching
All helpe he other with his teaching,
For where they good example take,
There is he with vaine glory shake.

"But let us leaven these preachours,
And speake of hem which in hir tours
Heape up hir gould, and fast shet,
And sore thereon their herte set:
They neither love God ne drede,
They keepe more than it is nede,
And in hir bagges sore it bind
Out of the sunne, and of the wind:
They put up more than need ware,
Whan they seen poore folke forfare,
For hunger die, and for cold quake;
God can wel vengeance therof take;
The great mischiefes hem assaileth,
And thus in gadering aye travaileth;
With muche paine they winne richesse,
And drede hem holdeth in distresse,
To keepe that they gather fast,
With sorrow they leave it at the last:
With sorrow they both die and live,
That unto richesse her hertes yeve.
And in defaute of love it is,
As it sheweth full well ywis:
For if these greedy, the sooth to saine,
Loveden, and were loved againe,
And good love raigned over all,
Such wickednesse ne should fall,
But he should yeve, that most good had
To hem that weren in neede bestad,
And live without false usure,
For charitie, full cleane and pure:
If they hem yeve to goodnesse,
Defending hem from idlenesse,
In all this world than poore none
We should finde, I trow not one:

But chaunged is this world unstable,
For love is over all vendable.
" We see that no man loveth now
But for winning and for prow,
And love is thralled in servage
Whan it is sold for advantage;
Yet women woll hir bodies sell:
Such soules goeth to the Divell of Hell."
When Love had told hem his entent,
The baronage to counsaile went,
In many sentences they fill,
And diversly they said hir will:
But after discord they accorded,
And hir accord to Love recorded:
" Sir," sayden they, " we been at one,
By even accord of everichone,
Outtake Richesse all onely
That sworne hath full hauteinly,
That she the castle n'ill not assaile,
Ne smite a stroke in this battaile,
With dart, ne mace, speare, ne knife,
For man that speaketh and beareth the life,
And blameth your emprise ywis,
And from our host departed is,
At least waie, as in this plite,
So hath she this man in dispite:
For she sayth he ne loved her never,
And therefore she woll hate him ever;
For he woll gather no treasore,
He hath her wrathe for evermore;
He agilte her never in other caas,
Lo here all hooly his trespas.
She sayeth well, that this other day
He asked her leave to gone the way

That is cleped too much yeving,
And spake full faire in his praying:
But whan he prayed her, poore was he,
Therefore she warned him the entre,
Ne yet is he not thriven so
That he hath getten a pennie or two,
That quietly is his owne in hold:
Thus hath Richesse us all told,
And whan Richesse us this recorded,
Withouten her we been accorded.
"And we finde in our accordaunce,
That False Semblaunt and Abstinaunce,
With all the folke of hir battaile
Shull at the hinder gate assaile,
That Wicked Tongue hath in keeping,
With his Normans full of jangling,
And with hem Courtesie and Largesse,
That shull shew hir hardynesse,
To the old wife that kept so hard
Faire Welcomming within her ward:
Than shall Delight and Well Heling
Fond Shame adoune to bring,
With all her host early and late,
They shull assaylen that ilke gate,
Against Drede shall Hardynesse
Assaile, and also Sikernesse,
With all the folke of hir leading
That never wist what wast slaying.

Fraunchise shall fight and eke Pite,
With Daunger full of cruelte,
Thus is your host ordained wele;
Downe shall the castle every dele,
If everiche doe his entent,

So that Venus be present,
Your mother full of vesselage
That can ynough of such usage;
Withouten her may no wight speed
This worke, neither for word ne deed:
Therefore is good ye for her send,
For through her may this worke amend."

"Lordinges, my mother, the gooddes,
That is my ladie, and my mistres,
N'is nat all at my willing,
Ne doth all my desiring.
Yet can she sometime doen labour,
Whan that her lust, in my succour.
As my neede is for to atchieve:
But now I thinke her not to grieve,
My mother is she, and of childhede
I both worship her, and eke drede,
For who that dredeth sire ne dame,
Shall it abie in bodie or name.
And nathelesse, yet can we
Send after her if need be,
And were she nigh, she commen would,
I trow that nothing might her hold.
"My mother is of great prowesse,
She hath tane many a forteresse,
That cost hath many a pound er this,
There I nas not present ywis,
And yet men sayd it was my deede,
But I come never in that steede,
Ne me ne liketh so mote I thee,
That such towers been take with mee,
For why? Me thinketh that in no wise,
It may be cleped but marchaundise.

Go buy a courser blacke or white,
And pay therefore, than art thou quite,
The marchaunt oweth thee right nought,
Ne thou him whan thou it bought.
I woll not selling clepe yeving,
For selling asketh no guerdoning,
Here lithe no thanke, ne no merite,
That one goeth from that other all quite,
But this selling is not semblable:
" For when his horse is in the stable
He may it sell againe parde,
And winnen on it, such happe may be,
All may the manne not lese ywis,
For at the least the skinne is his.
" Or else, if it so betide
That he woll keepe his horse to ride,
Yet is he lord aie of his horse:
But thilke chaffare is well worse,
There Venus entermeteth ought,
For who so such chaffare hath bought,
He shall not worchen so wisely,
That he ne shall lese utterly
Both his monney and his chaffare:
But the seller of the ware,
The prise and profite have shall,
Certaine the buyer shall lese all,
For he ne can so dere it buy
To have lordship and full maistry,
Ne have power to make letting,
Neither for yeft ne for preaching,
That of his chaffare maugre his,
Another shall have as much ywis,
If he woll yeve as much as he,
Of what countrey so that he be,

Or for right nought, so happe may,
If he can flatter her to her pay.
"Been then suche marchauntes wise?
No, but fooles in every wise,
Whan they buy such thing wilfully,
There as they lese hir good follily.
But nathelesse, this dare I say,
My mother is not wont to pay,
For she is neither so foole ne nice,
To entremete her of such vice,
But trust well, he shall paie all,
That repent of his bargaine shall,
Whan Poverte put him in distresse,
All were he scholler to Richesse,
That is for me in great yerning,
Whan she assenteth to my willing.

But by my mother saint Venus,
And by her father Saturnus,
That her engendred by his life,
But nat upon his wedded wife,
Yet woll I more unto you swere,
To make this thing the surere.
"Now by that faith, and that beautee
That I owe to all my brethren free,
Of which there n'is wight under Heaven
That can hir fathers names neven,
So divers and so many there be,
That with my mother have be prive,
Yet woll I sweare for sikernesse,
The pole of Hell to my witnesse,
Now drinke I not this yeare clarre,
If that I lye, or forsworne be,
For of the goddes the usage is,

That who so him forsweareth amis,
Shall that yeere drinke no clarre.
"Now have I sworne ynough parde,
If I forsweare me than am I lorne,
But I woll never be forsworne:
Sith Richesse hath me failed here,
She shall abie that trespasse dere,
At least way but I her harme
With swerd, or sparth, or gisarme.
"For certes sith she loveth not me,
Fro thilke time that she may see
The castle and the tower to shake,
In sorrie time she shall awake;
If I may gripe a rich man
I shall so pull him, if I can,
That he shall in a fewe stoundes,
Lese all his markes, and his poundes.
"I shall him make his pence out sling,
But they in his garner spring,
Our maidens shall eke plucke him so,
That him shall needen feathers mo,
And make him sell his lond to spend,
But he the bet can him defend.

Poore men han made hir lord of me;
Although they not so mightie be,
That they may feede me in delite,
I woll not have them in dispite:
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
For chinch and feloun is Richesse,
That so can chase hem and dispise,
And hem defoule in sundrie wise:
They loven full bette, so God me spede,
Than doeth the rich chinchy grede,

And been (in good faith) more stable
And truer, and more serviable:
And therefore it suffiseth me
Hir good herte, and hir beaute;
They han on me set all their thought,
And therefore I foryete hem nought.
"I woll hem bring in great noblesse,
If that I were god of richesse,
As I am god of love soothly,
Such ruth upon hir plaint have I:
Therefore I must his succour be,
That paineth him to serven me,
For if he dyed for love of this,
Than seemeth in me no love there is."
"Sir," sayd they, "sooth is everie dele
That ye rehearse, and we wote wele
Thilke oath to hold is reasonable,
For it is good and covenable,
That ye on riche men han sworne:
For, sir, this wote we well beforne,
If rich men doen you homage,
That is as fooles doen outrage,
But ye shull not forsworne be,
Ne let therefore to drinke clarre,
Or piment maked fresh and new,
Ladies shull hem such pepir brew,
If that they fall into hir laas,
That they for woe mow saine Alas!
Ladies shullen ever so courteous be,
That they shall quite your oath all free;
Ne seeketh never other vicaire,
For they shall speake with hem so faire
That ye shall hold you payd full well,
Though ye you meddle never a deale,

Let ladies worch with hir thinges,
They shall hem tell so fele tidinges,
And moove hem eke so many requestis
By flatterie, that not honest is,
And thereto yeve hem such thankinges,
What with kissing, and with talkinges,
That certes if they trowed be,
Shall never leave hem lond ne fee
That it n'ill as the meble fare,
Of which they first delivered are:
Now may you tell us all your will,
And we your hestes shall fulfill.

But False Semblaunt dare not for drede
Of you, sir, meddle him of this dede,
For he sayth that ye been his foe,
He n'ot, if ye will worch him woe:
Wherefore we pray you all, beau sire,
That ye foryeve him now your ire,
And that he may dwell as your man
With Abstinence his deere lemman,
This our accord and our will now."
"Parfey," said Love, "I graunt it you,
I woll well hold him for my man,
Now let him come:" and he forth ran.
"Falsesemblant," (quod Love) "in this wise
I take thee here to my service,
That thou our friendes helpe alwaie,
And hindreth hem neither night ne daie,
But doe thy might hem to relieve,
And eke our enemies that thou grieve,
Thine be this might, I graunt it thee,
My king of harlotes shalt thou bee:
We woll that thou have such honour,

Certaine thou art a false traitour,
And eke a theefe; sith thou were borne,
A thousand times thou art forsworne:
But nathelesse in our hearing,
To put our folke out of doubting,
I bidde thee teach hem, wost thou how?
By some generall signe now,
In what place thou shalt founden be,
If that men had mister of thee,
And how men shall thee best espie,
For thee to know is great maistrie,
Tell in what place is thine haunting."
" Sir I have full divers wonning,
That I keepe not rehearsed be,
So that ye would respiten me,
For if that I tell you the sooth,
I may have harme and shame both,
If that my fellowes wisten it,
My tales shoulden me be quit,
For certaine they would hate me,
If ever I knew hir cruelte,
For they would over all hold hem still
Of troth, that is againe hir will,
Such tales keepen they not here,
I might eftsoone buy it full dere,
If I saied of hem any thing,
That ought displeaseth to hir hearing,
For what word that hem pricketh or biteth,
In that word none of hem deliteth,
All were it gospell the evangile,
That would reprove hem of hir guile,
For they are cruell and hautain;
And this thing wote I well certain,
If I speake ought to paire hir loos,

Your court shall not so well be cloos,
That they ne shall wite it at last:
Of good men am I nought agast,
For they woll taken on hem nothing,
Whan that they know all my meaning,
But he that woll it on him take,
He woll himselfe suspicious make,
That he his life let covertly,
In guile and in hypocrisie,
That me engendred and yave fostring."
"They made a full good engendring,"
(Quod Love) "for who so soothly tell,
They engendred the Divell of Hell.
"But needely, howsoever it bee"
(Quod Love) "I will and charge thee,
To tell anon thy wonning placis,
Hearing each wight that in this place is:
And what life thou livest also,
Hide it no lenger now, whereto:
Thou must discover all thy worching,
How thou servest, and of what thing,
Though that thou shuldest for thy sothsaw
Ben all to beaten and to draw,
And yet art thou not wont parde,
But nathelesse, though thou beaten be,
Thou shalt not be the first, that so
Hath for soothsawe suffred wo."
"Sir, sith that it may liken you,
Though that I should be slaine right now,
I shall doen your commaundement,
For thereto have I great talent."
Withouten words mo, right than
False Semblaunt his sermon began,
And saied hem thus in audience,

" Barons, take heed of my sentence,
That wight that list to have knowing
Of False Semblant full of flattering,
He must in worldly folke him seke,
And certes in the cloysters eke,
I won no where, but in hem tway,
But not like even, sooth to say,
Shortly I woll herborow me,
There I hope best to hulstred be,
And certainely, sikerest hiding
Is underneath humblest clothing.
" Religious folke ben full covert,
Secular folke ben more apert:
But nathelesse, I woll not blame
Religious folke, ne hem diffame
In what habite that ever they go:
Religion humble, and true also,
Woll I not blame, ne dispise,
But I n'ill love it in no wise,
I meane of false religious,
That stout been, and malicious,
That wollen in an habite go,
And setten not hir herte thereto.

Religious folke been all pitous,
Thou shalt not seene one dispitous,
They loven no pride, ne no strife,
But humbly they woll lede hir life,
With which folke woll I never be,
And if I dwell, I faine me
I may well in hir habite go,
But me were lever my necke atwo,
Than let a purpose that I take,
What covenaunt that ever I make.

" I dwell with hem that proude be,
And full of wiles and subtelte.
That worship of this world coveiten,
And great nede connen expleiten,
And gone and gadren great pitaunces,
And purchase hem the acquaintaunces
Of men that mightie life may leden,
And faine hem poore, and hemselfe feden
With good morsels delicious,
And drinken good wine precious,
And preach us povert and distresse,
And fishen hemselfe great richesse,
With wily nettes that they cast,
It woll come foule out at the last.
" They ben fro cleane religion went,
They make the world an argument,
That hath a foule conclusion.
I have a robe of religion,
Than am I all religious:
This argument is all roignous,
It is not worth a crooked brere,
Habite ne maketh neither monke ne frere,
But cleane life and devotion,
Maketh men of good religion.
" Nathelesse, there can none answere,
How high that ever his head he shere,
With rasour whetted never so kene,
That guile in braunches cutte thurtene,
There can no wight distinct it so,
That he dare say a word thereto.
" But what herborow that ever I take,
Or what semblaunt that ever I make,
I meane but guile, and follow that,
For right no more than Gibbe our cat,

(That awaiteth mice and rattes to killen)
Ne entend I but to beguilen,
Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
Wete with what folke is my dwelling,
Ne by my wordes yet parde,
So soft and so pleasaunt they be.
" Behold the deedes that I do,
But thou be blind thou oughtest so,
For varie hir wordes fro hir deed,
They thinke on guile withouten dreed,
What manner clothing that they weare,
Or what estate what ever they beare,
Lered or leud, lord or ladie,
Knight, squire, burgeis, or bailie."
Right thus while False Semblant sermoneth,
Eftsoones Love him aresoneth,
And brake his tale in his speaking
As though he had him told leasing.
And saied: " What devill is that I heare?
What folke hast thou us nempned here?
May menne find religioun
In worldly habitatioun?"
" Yea, sir, it followeth nat that they
Should lead a wicked life parfey,
Ne not therefore hir soules lese,
That hem to worldly clothes chese,
For certes it were great pitee;
Men may in secular clothes see,
Florishen holy religioun;
Full many a saint in field and toun,
With many a virgine glorious,
Devout, and full religious,
Han died, that common cloth aye beren,
Yet saintes neverthelesse they weren.

I could recken you many a ten,
Yea welnigh all these holy women
That men in churches hery and seke,
Both maidens, and these wives eke,
That baren full many a faire child here,
Weared alway clothes seculere,
And in the same diden they
That saints weren, and ben alway.
" The nine thousand maidens dere,
That beren in Heaven hir cierges clere,
Of which men rede in church and sing,
Were take in secular clothing,
When they received martirdome,
And wonnen Heaven unto hir home.
" Good herte maketh the good thought,
The clothing yeveth ne reveth nought:
The good thought and the worching,
That maketh the religion flouring,
There lieth the good religioun,
After the right ententioun.
" Who so tooke a weathers skin,
And wrapped a greedy wolfe therein,
For he should go with lambes white,
Wenest thou not he would hem bite?
Yes: neverthelesse as he were wood
He would hem wirry, and drinke the blood,
And well the rather hem deceive,
For sith they coude nat perceive
His tregette, and his crueltie,
They would him follow, altho he flie.

If there be wolves of such hew,
Amonges these apostles new
Thou, holy church, thou maist be wailed,

Sith that thy citie is assailed
Through knightes of thine owne table,
God wot thy lordship is doutable:
If they enforce it to win,
That should defend it fro within,
Who might defence ayenst hem make?
Without stroke it mote be take,
Of trepeget or mangonell,
Without displaying of pensell,
And if God n'ill done it succour,
But let renne in this colour,
Thou must thy hestes letten bee,
Than is there nought, but yeeld thee,
Or yeve hem tribute douteles,
And hold it of hem to have pees:
But greater harme betide thee,
That they all maister of it bee:
Well con they scorne thee withall,
By day stuffen they the wall,
And all the night they minen there:
Nay, thou planten must els where
Thine impes, if thou wolt fruit have,
Abide not there thy selfe to save,

But now peace, here I turne againe,
I woll no more of this thing faine,
If I might passen me hereby,
For I might maken you weary;
But I woll heten you alway,
To helpe your friendes what I may,
So they wollen my company,
For they been shent all utterly,
But if so fall, that I be
Oft with hem, and they with me,

And eke my lemman mote they serve,
Or they shull not my love deserve,
Forsooth I am a false traitour,
God judged me for a theefe trechour,
Forsworne I am, but well nigh none
Wote of my guile, till it be done.
"Through me hath many one deth received,
That my treget never aperceived,
And yet receiveth, and shall receive,
That my falsenesse shall never apperceive:
But who so doth, if he wise be,
Him is right good beware of me.
But so sligh is the aperceiving
That all to late commeth knowing;
For Protheus that coud him chaunge,
In every shape homely and straunge,
Coud never such guile ne treasoun
As I, for I come never in toun
There as I might knowen be,
Though men me both might here and see.
Full well I can my clothes chaunge,
Take one, and make another straunge.
Now am I knight, now chastelaine,
Now prelate, and now chaplaine,
Now priest, now clerke, now fostere,
Now am I maister, now schollere
Now monke, now chanon, now baily,
What ever mister man am I.
"Now am I prince, now am I page,
And can by herte every language,
Sometime am I hoore and old,
Now am I younge, stoute, and bold,
Now am I Robert, now Robin,
Now frere minor, now jacobin,

And with me followeth my loteby,
To done me sollace and company,
That hight dame Abstinence, and raigned
In many a queint array faigned,
Right as it commeth to her liking,
I fulfill all her desiring.
" Sometime a womans clothe take I,
Now am I a maid, now lady.
" Sometime I am religious,
Now like an anker in an hous.
" Sometime am I prioresse,
And now a nonne, and now abbesse,
And go through all regiouns,
Seeking all religiouns.
" But to what order that I am sworne,
I take the straw and beat the corne,
To jolly folke I enhabite,
I aske no more but hir habite.
" What woll ye more? in every wise
Right as me list I me disguise?
" Well can I beare me under wede,
Unlike is my word to my dede,
Thus make I into my trappes fall
The people, through my priviledges all,
That ben in Christendome alive.
" I may assoile, and I may shrive,
That no prelate may let me,
All folke, where ever they found be:
I n'ot no prelate may done so,
But it the pope be, and no mo,
That made thilke establishing,
Now is not this a proper thing?
But were my sleights apperceived
. . . . . .

As I was wont, and wost thou why?
For I did hem a tregetry,
But thereof yeve I a little tale,
I have the silver and the male,
So have I preached and eke shriven,
So have I take, so have I yeven,
Through hir folly, husbond and wife,
That I lede right a jolly life,
Through simplesse of the prelacy,
They know not all my tregettry.

But for as much as man and wife
Should shew hir parish priest hir life
Ones a yeare, as sayth the booke,
Ere any wight his housel tooke,
Than have I priviledges large,
That may of muche thing discharge,
For he may say right thus pardee:
"'Sir Priest, in shrift I tell it thee,
That he to whom that I am shriven,
Hath me assoyled, and me yeven
Penaunce soothly for my sin,
Which that I found me guilty in,
Ne I ne have never entencion
To make double confession,
Ne rehearse eft my shrift to thee,
O shrift is right ynough to mee,
This ought thee suffice wele,
Ne be not rebell never adele,
For certes, though thou haddest it sworne,
I wote no priest ne prelate borne
That may to shrift eft me constraine,
And if they done I woll me plaine,
For I wote where to plaine wele,

Thou shalt not streine me a dele,
Ne enforce me, ne not me trouble,
To make my confession double;
Ne I have none affection
To have double absolution:
The first is right ynough to mee,
This latter assoyling quite I thee,
I am unbound, what maist thou find
More of my sinnes me to unbind?
For he that might hath in his hond,
Of all my sinnes me unbond:
And if thou wolt me thus constraine
That me mote nedes on thee plaine,
There shall no judge imperiall,
Ne bishop, ne officiall,
Done judgement on me, for I
Shall gone and plaine me openly
Unto my shriftfather new,
That hight Frere Wolfe untrew,
And he shall chuse him for mee,
For I trow he can hamper thee;
But lord he would be wroth withall,
If men would him Frere Wolfe call,
For he would have no patience,
But done all cruell vengience,
He would his might done at the leest,
Nothing spare for Goddes heest,
And God so wise be my succour,
But thou yeve me my saviour
At Easter, whan it liketh mee,
Without preasing more on thee,
I woll forth, and to him gone,
And he shall housell me anone,
For I am out of thy grutching,

I keepe not deale with thee nothing.'
" Thus may he shrive him, that forsaketh
His parish priest and to me taketh,
And if the priest woll him refuse,
I am full ready him to accuse,
And him punish and hamper so,
That he his churche shall forgo.
" But who so hath in his feeling
The consequence of such shriving,
Shall seene, that priest may never have might
To know the conscience aright
Of him that is under his cure:
And this is ayenst holy scripture,
That biddeth every herde honest
Have very knowing of his beest.
But poore folke that gone by strete,
That have no gold, ne summes grete,
Hem would I let to hir prelates,
Or let hir priestes know hir states,
For to me right nought yeve they,
And why it is, for they ne may.
" They ben so bare, I take no keepe,
But I woll have the fat sheepe;
Let parish priests have the lene,
I yeve not of hir harme a bene;
And if that prelates grutch it,
That oughten wroth be in hir wit,
To lese hir fat beastes so,
I shall yeve hem a stroke or two,
That they shall lesen with force,
Yea, both hir mitre and hir croce.
" Thus yape I hem, and have do long,
My priviledges ben so strong."
False Semblant would have stinted here,

But Love ne made him no such chere,
That he was weary of his saw,
But for to make him glad and faw,
He said, " Tell on more specially,
How that thou servest untruly.
" Tell forth, and shame thee never adele,
For as thine habit sheweth wele,
Thou servest an holy hermite.
" Sooth is, but I am but an hypocrite,
Thou goest and preachest poverte?
" Yea, sir, but Richesse hath poste,
Thou preachest abstinence also?"
" Sir, I woll fillen, so mote I go,
My paunche, of good meat and wine,
As should a maister of divine,
For how that I me poore faine,
Yet all poore folke I disdaine.

I LOVE better the acquaintaunce
Ten times of the king of Fraunce,
Than of a poore man of mild mood,
Though that his soule be also good.
" For whan I see beggers quaking,
Naked on mixens all stinking,
For hunger crie, and eke for care,
I entremet not of hir fare,
They ben so poore, and full of pine,
They might not ones yeve me a dine,
For they have nothing but hir life,
What should he yeve that licketh his knife?
It is but folly to entremete
To seeke in houndes nest fat mete:
Let beare hem to the spittle anone,
But fro me comfort get they none:

But a rich sicke usurere
Would I visite and draw nere,
Him would I comfort and rehete,
For I hope of his gold to gete,
And if that wicked Death him have,
I woll go with him in his grave,
And if there any reprove me,
Why that I let the poore be,
Wost thou how I not ascape?
I say and sweare him full rape,
That riche men han more tetches
Of sinne, than han poore wretches,
And han of counsaile more mistere,
And therefore I would draw hem nere:
But as great hurt, it may so be,
Hath a soule in right great poverte,
As soule in great richesse forsooth,
Albeit that they hurten both,
For richesse and mendicities
Ben cleped two extreamities,
The meane is cleped suffisaunce,
There lieth of vertue the aboundaunce.
" For Salomon full well I wote,
In his parables us wrote,
As it is knowen of many a wight,
In his thirteene chapiter right,
God thou me keepe for thy poste,
Fro richesse and mendicite,
For if a rich man him dresse,
To thinke too much on richesse,
His herte on that so ferre is sette,
That he his creator doth foryette,
And him that beggeth, woll aye greve,
How should I by his word him leve,

Unneth that he n'is a micher,
Forsworne, or els Goddes lier,
Thus sayth Salomon sawes.
" Ne we find written in no lawes,
And namely in our Christen lay,
(Who saith ye, I dare say nay)
That Christ, ne his apostles dere,
While that they walked in earth here,
Were never seene hir bred begging,
For they nolden beggen for nothing.
" And right thus were men wont to teach,
And in this wise would it preach,
The maisters of divinitie
Sometime in Paris the citie.

And if men would there gaine appose
The naked text, and let the glose,
It might soone assoiled bee,
For men may well the sooth see,
That pardie they might aske a thing
Plainely forth without begging,
For they weren Goddes herdes dere,
And cure of soules hadden here,
They nolde nothing begge hir food,
For after Christ was done on rood,
With their proper honds they wrought,
And with travaile, and els nought,
They wonnen all hir sustenaunce,
And liveden forth in hir penaunce,
And the remenaunt yafe away
To other poore folkes alway.
" They neither builden toure ne halle,
But they in houses small with alle.
" A mighty man that can and may,

Should with his hond and body alway,
Winne him his food in labouring,
If he ne have rent or such a thing;
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
Thus mote he done, or do trespaas,
But if it be in certaine caas,
That I can rehearse, if mister bee,
Right well, whan the time I see.
" Seeke the booke of Saint Augustine,
Be it in paper or perchemine,
There as he witte of these worchings,
Thou shalt seene that none excusings
A perfit man ne should seeke
By wordes, ne by deedes eke,
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
That he ne shall, so mote I go,
With proper honds and body also
Get his food in labouring,
If he ne have properte of thing,
Yet should he sell all his substaunce,
And with his swinke have sustenaunce,
If he be perfite in bounte;
Thus han the bookes told me:
For he that woll gone idelly,
And useth it aye busily
To haunten other mennes table,
He is a trechour full of fable,
Ne he ne may by good reason
Excuse him by his orison,
For men behoveth in some gise,
Ben sometime in Goddes service,
To gone and purchasen hir nede.

"Men mote eaten, that is no drede,
And sleepe, and eke do other thing,
So long may they leave praying.
"So may they eke hir prayer blinne,
While that they werke hir meat to winne,
Saint Austine woll thereto accord,
In thilke booke that I record.
"Justinian eke, that made lawes,
Hath thus forboden by old sawes:
'No man, up paine to be dead,
Mighty of body, to beg his bread,
If he may swinke it for to gete,
Men should him rather maime or bete,
Or done of him aperte justice,
Than suffren him in such mallice.'
"They done not well so mote I go,
That taken such almesse so,
But if they have some priviledge,
That of the paine hem woll alledge.
"But how that is, can I not see,
But if the prince deceived bee,
Ne I ne wene not sikerly,
That they may have it rightfully
"But I woll not determine
Of princes power, ne define,
Ne by my word comprehend ywis,
If it so ferre may stretch in this;
I woll not entremete a dele,
But I trow that the booke sayth wele,
Who that taketh almesses, that bee
Dew to folke that men may see
Lame, feeble, weary, and bare,
Poore, or in such manner care,
That con winne hem nevermo,

For they have no power thereto,
He eateth his owne dampning,
But if he lie that made all thing.
And if ye such a truant find,
Chastise him well, if ye be kind,
But they would hate you parcaas,
If ye fellen in hir laas.
" They would eftsoones do you scathe,
If that they might, late or rathe,
For they be not full patient,
That han the world thus foule blent,
And weteth well, that God bad
The good man sell all that he had,
And follow him, and to poore it yeve:
He would not therefore that he live,
To serven him in mendience,
For it was never his sentence,
But he bad werken whan that need is,
And follow him in goode deedis.
" Saint Poule that loved all holy church,
He bade the apostles for to wurch,
And winnen hir livelode in that wise,
And hem defended truandise,
And said, werketh with your honden,
Thus should the thing be understonden.
" He nolde ywis have bid hem begging,
Ne sellen gospell, ne preaching,
Least they beraft, with hir asking,
Folke of hir cattell or of hir thing.
" For in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or else he
Would of the asker delivered be,
And for he him encombreth so,

He yeveth him good to let him go.
But it can him nothing profite,
They lese the yeft and the merite.
"The good folke that Poule to preached,
Profred him oft, whan he hem teached,
Some of hir good in charite,
But thereof right nothing tooke he,
But of his honde would he gette
Clothes to wrine him, and his mete.

Tell me than how a man may liven,
That all his good to poore hath yeven,
And woll but onely bidde his bedes,
And never with honds labour his nedes.
May he do so? Yea sir: and how?
Sir I woll gladly tell you:
Saint Austen saith, a man may be
In houses that han properte,
As templers and hospitelers,
And as these chanons regulers,
Or white monkes, or these blake,
I woll no mo ensamples make,
And take thereof his susteining,
For therein lithe no begging,
But otherwaies not ywis,
Yet Austen gabbeth not of this,
And yet full many a monke laboureth,
That God in holy church honoureth:
For whan hir swinking is agone,
They rede and sing in church anone.
"And for there hath ben great discord,
As many a wight may beare record,
Upon the estate of mendicience,
I woll shortely in your presence,

Tell how a man may begge at need,
That hath not wherewith him to feed,
Maugre his fellowes janglings,
For soothfastnesse woll none hidings,
And yet percase I may obey,
That I to you soothly thus sey.

Lo here the case especiall,
If a man be so bestiall,
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desireth ignorence,
Than may he go a begging yerne,
Till he some other craft can lerne,
Through which without truanding,
He may in trouth have his living.
"Or if he may done no labour,
For elde, or sicknesse, or langour,
Or for his tender age also,
Than may he yet a begging go.
"Or if he have peraventure,
Through usage of his noriture,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folke comenly,
Han of his mischeefe some pite,
And suffren him also, that he
May gone about and begge his bread,
That he be not for honger dead;
Or if he have of craft conning,
And strength also, and desiring
To worchen, as he had what,
But he find neither this ne that,
Than may he begge till that he
Have getten his necessite.
"Or if his winning be so lite,

That his labour woll not aquite
Sufficiauntly all his living,
Yet may he go his brede begging
Fro dore to dore, he may go trace,
Till he the remnaunt may purchace.
" Or if a man would undertake
Any emprise for to make,
In the rescous of our lay,
And it defenden as he may,
Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other convenable cure,
If it be so he poore be,
Than may he begge, till that he
May find in trouth for to swinke
And get him clothe, meat, and drinke,
Swinke he with his hondes corporell,
And not with hondes espirituell.

In all this case, and in semblables,
If that there ben mo reasonables,
He may begge, as I tell you here,
And eles not in no manere,
As William Saint Amour would preach,
And oft would dispute and teach
Of this matter all openly
At Paris full solemnely,
And also God my soule blesse
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The accord of the universite
And of the people, as seemeth me.
" No good man ought it to refuse,
Ne ought him thereof to excuse,
Be wrothe or blithe, who so be,
For I woll speake, and tell it thee,

All should I die, and be put doun,
As was saint Poule in derke prisoun,
Or be exiled in this caas
With wrong, as maister William was,
That my mother Hypocrisie
Banished for her great envie.
"My mother flemed him Saint Amour:
This noble did suche labour
To sustene ever the loyalte,
That he too much agilte me:
He made a booke, and let it write,
Wherein his life he did all write,
And would iche renied begging,
And lived by my traveiling,
If I ne had rent ne other good,
What weneth he that I were wood?
For labour might me never please,
I have more will to ben at ease,
And have well lever, sooth to say,
Before the people patter and pray,
And wrie me in my foxerie
Under a cope of papelardie."
(Quod Love) "What divell is this that I here,
What wordes tellest thou me here?"
"What, sir, falsenesse, that apert is."
"Than dredest thou not God?" "No certes:
For selde in great thing shall he spede
In this world, that God woll drede,
For folke that hem to vertue yeven,
And truely on hir owen liven,
And hem in goodnesse aye content,
On hem is little thrift ysent,
Such folke drinken great misease,
That life may me never please.

"But see what gold han usurers,
And silver eke in garners,
Taillagiers, and these monyours,
Bailliffes, bendles, provost, countours,
These liven well nigh by ravine,
The small people hem mote encline,
And they as wolves woll hem eten:
Upon the poore folke they geten
Full much of that they spend or kepe,
N'is none of hem that they n'ill strepe,
And wrine hem selfe well at full,
Without scalding they hem pull.
"The strong the feeble overgothe,
But I that weare my simple clothe,
Robbe both robbed, and robbours,
And guile guiling, and guilours:
By my treget, I gather and threste
The great treasour into my cheste,
That lieth with me so fast bound,
Mine high paleis doe I found,
And my delightes I fulfill,
With wine at feastes at my will,
**And tables full of entremees;**
**I woll no life, but ease and pees,**
**And winne gold to spend also,**
**For whan the greate bagge is go,**
**It commeth right with my japes,**
**Make I not well tomble mine apes:**
**To winnen is alway mine entent,**
**My purchase is better than my rent,**
**For though I should beaten be,**
**Over all I entremet me;**
**Without me maie no wight dure,**
**I walke soules for to cure,**

Of all the world cure have I
In brede and length; boldely
I woll both preach and eke counsailen,
With hondes woll I not travailen,
For of the pope I have the bull,
I ne hold not my wittes dull,
I woll not stinten in my live
These emperours for to shrive,
Or kinges, dukes, and lordes grete:
But poore folke all quite I lete,
I love no such shriving parde,
But it for other cause be:
I recke not of poore men,
Hir estate is not worth an hen.
"Where findest thou a swinker of labour
Have me to his confessour?
But empresses, and duchesses,
These queenes, and eke countesses,
These abbesses, and eke bigines,
These great ladies palasins,
These jolly knights, and bailives,
These nonnes, and these burgeis wives
That riche ben, and eke pleasing,
And these maidens welfaring,
Where so they clad or naked be,
Uncounsailed goeth there none fro me;
And for hir soules safete,
At lord and lady, and hir meine,
I aske, whan they hem to me shrive,
The propertie of all hir live,
And make hem trow, both most and least,
Hir parish priest is but a beast
Ayenst me and my company,
That shrewes been as great (as I)

For which I woll not hide in hold,
No privete that me is told,
That I by word or signe ywis,
Ne woll make hem know what it is,
And they wollen also tellen me,
They hele fro me no privite.
And for to make you hem perceiven,
That usen folke thus to deceiven,
I woll you saine withouten dwale,
What men may in the Gospell rede,
Of Saint Mathew the gospelleur,
That saieth, as I shall you say here.

Upon the chaire of Moses
Thus it is glosed doutelès,
(That is the olde testament,
For thereby is the chaire ment)
Sitte scribes and pharisen,
That is to saine, the cursed men,
Which that we ipocrites call:
Doeth that they preache, I rede you all,
But doeth not as they doen adele,
That been not weary to say wele.
But to doe well, no will have they,
And they would bind on folke alway
(That been to be beguiled able)
Burdons that been importable;
On folkes shoulders things they couchen,
That they n'ill with their fingers touchen.
And why woll they not touch it, why?
For hem ne list nat sikerly,
For sadde burdons that men taken,
Make folkes shoulders aken.
"And if they do ought that good bee,

That is for folke it should see:
Hir burdons larger maken they,
And maken hir hemmes wide alwey,
And loven seates at the table
The first and most honourable,
And for to han the first chairis,
In synagogues, to hem full dere is,
And willen that folke hem loute and grete,
Whan that they passen through the strete,
And wollen be cleped maister also:
But they ne should not willen so,
The gospell is there ayenst I gesse,
That sheweth well hir wickednesse.

Another custome use we
Of hem that woll ayenst us be,
We hate hem deadly everychone,
And we woll werry him, as one,
Him that one hateth, hate we all,
And conject how to doen him fall:
And if we seene him winne honour,
Richesse or preise, through his valour,
Provende, rent, or dignite,
Full fast ywis compassen we
By what ladder he is clomben so,
And for to maken him downe to go,
With treason we woll him defame,
And doen him lese his good name.
"Thus from his ladder we him take,
And thus his frendes foes we make,
But word ne wete shall he none,
Till all his frendes been his fone,
For if we did it openly,
We might have blame readily,

For had he wist of our mallice,
He had him kept, but he were nice.
" Another is this, that if so fall,
That there be one among us all
That doeth a good tourne, out of drede,
We saine it is our alder dede,
Yea sikerly, though he it fained,
Or that him list, or that him dained
A man through him avaunced be,
Thereof all parteners be we,
And tellen folke where so we go,
That man through us is sprongen so.
" And for to have of men praising,
We purchase through our flattering
Of riche men of great poste
Letters, to witnesse our bounte,
So that man weeneth that may us see,
That all vertue in us bee.
" And alway poore we us faine,
But how so that we begge or plaine,
We ben the folke without leasing,
That all thing have without having.
" Thus be dradde of the people ywis,
And gladly my purpose is this.
" I deale with no wight, but he
Have gold and treasour great plente,
Hir acquaintaunce well love I:
This much my desire shortly,
I entremet me of brocages,
I make peace and mariages,
I am gladly executour,
And many times a procuratour,
I am sometime messangere,
That falleth not to my mistere.

" And many times I make enquest,
For me that office is nat honest,
To deale with other mennes thing,
That is to me a great liking:
And if that ye have ought to do
In place that I repaire to,
I shall it speden through my wit,
As soone as ye have told me it,
So that ye serve me to pay,
My service shall be yours alway.
" But who so woll chastice me,
Anone my love lost hath he,
For I love no man in no gise,
That woll me reprove or chastise,
But I woll all folke undertake,
And of no wight no teaching take,
For I that other folke chastie,
Woll not be taught fro my follie.

I LOVE none hermitage more,
All desertes and holtes hoore
And greate woodes everychon,
I let hem to the Baptist Iohn,
I queth him quite, and him relesse
Of Egipt all the wildernesse;
Too ferre were all my mansiouns
Fro all cities and good touns.
" My paleis and mine house make I
There men may renne in openly,
And say that I the world forsake,
But all amidde I build and make
My house, and swim and play therein
Bette than a fish doeth with his finne.

Of Antichristes men am I,
Of which that Christ sayeth openly,
They have habite of holinesse,
And liven in such wickednesse.
" Outward lamben seemen we,
Full of goodnesse and of pite,
And inward we withouten fable
Been greedy wolves ravisable.
" We environ both lond and see,
With all the world werrien wee,
We woll ordaine of alle thing,
Of folkes good, and hir living.
" If there be castell or cite
Within that any bougerons be,
Although that they of Millaine were,
For thereof been they blamed there;
Or if a wight out of measure,
Would lene hir gold, and take usure,
For that he is so covetous,
Or if he be too lecherous,
Or these that haunten simonie,
Or provost full of trecherie,
Or prelate living jollily,
Or priest that halt his quein him by,
Or olde hoores hostillers,
Or other baudes or bordellers,
Or els blamed of any vice,
Of which men shoulden doen justice:
" By all the saintes that we prey,
But they defend them with lamprey,
With luce, with elis, with samons,
With tender geese, and with capons,
With tartes, or with cheses fat,
With daintie flaunes, brode and flat,

With caleweis, or with pullaile,
With coninges, or with fine vitaile,
That we under our clothes wide,
Maken through our gollet glide,
Or but he woll doe come in hast
Roe venison bake in past,
Whether so that he loure or groine,
He shall have of a corde a loigne,
With which men shall him bind and lede,
To brenne him for his sinful dede,
That men shull heare him crie and rore
A mile way about and more,
Or els he shall in prison die,
But if he woll his friendship buy,
Or smerten that, that he hath do,
More than his guilt amounteth to.
" But and he couth through his sleight
Doe maken up a toure of height,
Nought rought I whether of stone or tree,
Or earth, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with squier and scantilone,
So that the toure were stuffed well
With all riches temporell:
" And than that he would up dresse
Engines, both more and lesse,
To cast at us by every side,
To beare his good name wide:
" Such sleightes I shall you yeven,
Barrels of wine, by sixe or seven,
Or gold in sackes great plente,
He should soone delivered be,
And if he have no such pitences,
Let him studie in equipolences,

And lette lies and fallaces,
If that he would deserve our graces,
Or we shall beare him such witnesse
Of sinne, and of his wretchednesse,
And doun his lose so wide renne
That all quicke we should him brenne,
Or els yeve him such penaunce,
That is well worse than the pitaunce.
" For thou shalt never for nothing
Con knowen aright by hir clothing
The traitours full of trecherie,
But thou hir werkes can espie.
" And ne had the good keeping be
Whylome of the universite,
That keepeth the key of Christendome,
We had been tourmented all and some.
" Such been the stinking prophetis,
N'is none of hem, that good prophet is,
For they through wicked entention,
The yeare of the incarnation
A thousand and two hundred yere,
Five and fiftie ferther ne nere,
Broughten a booke with sorrie grace,
To yeven ensample in common place,
That saied thus, though it were fable,
This is the gospell perdurable,
That fro the Holy Ghost is sent.
Well were it worthe to be brent.
Entitled was in such manere
This booke, of which I tell here,
There nas no wight in all Paris,
Beforne our ladie at parvis,
That they ne might the booke buy,
The sentence pleased hem well truely.

To the copie, if him talent tooke
Of the evangelistes booke,
There might he see by great traisoun
Full many a false comparisoun.
" As much as through his greate might,
Be it of heate or of light,
The Sunne surmounteth the Moone,
That troubler is, and chaungeth soone,
And the nutte kernell the shell,
I scorne nat that I you tell:
" Right so withouten any gile
Surmounteth this noble evangile,
The word of any evangelist,
And to hir title they tooken Christ,
And many such comparisoun,
Of which I make no mentioun,
Might menne in that booke find,
Who so could of hem have mind.
" The universitie that tho was asleepe
Gan for to braide, and taken keepe,
And at the noise, the head up cast,
Ne never sithen slept it fast,
But up it stert, and armes tooke
Ayenst this false horrible booke,
All ready battaile for to make,
And to the judge the booke they take.
" But they that broughten the booke there,
Hent it anone away for feare,
They n'olde shew it no more a dele,
But than it kept, and keepen wele,
Till such a time that they may see,
That they so stronge woxen bee,
That no wight may hem well withstond,
For by that booke they durst not stond,

Away they gonne it for to bere,
For they ne durst not answere
By exposition no glose
To that that clerkes woll oppose
Ayenst the curssednesse ywis
That in that booke written is.
"Now wote I nat, ne I can nat see
What manner end that there shall bee
Of all this that they hide,
But yet algate they shall abide,
Till that they may it bette defend,
This trow I best woll be hir end.
"Thus Antichrist abiden we,
For we ben all of his meine,
And what man that woll not be so,
Right soone he shall his life forgo.
We woll a people upon him areise,
And through our guile doen him deise,
And him on sharpe speares rive,
Or other waies bring him fro live,
But if that he woll follow ywis,
That in our booke written is.

Thus much woll our booke signifie,
That while Peter had maistrie
May never Iohn shew well his might.
"Now have I you declared right,
The meaning of the barke and rinde,
That maketh the entencions blinde,
But now at erst I woll begin,
To expoune you the pith within,
And the seculers comprehend,
That Christes lawe woll defend,
And should it kepen and maintainen

Ayenst hem that all sustenen,
And falsely to the people teachen,
That Iohn betokeneth hem to preachen,
That there n'is law covenable,
But thilke gospell perdurable,
That fro the Holy Ghost was sent
To turne folke that ben miswent.
"The strength of John they understond,
The grace in which they say they stond,
That doeth the sinfull folke convert,
And hem to Jesu Christ revert,
Full many another horriblee,
May menne in that booke see,
That been commaunded doubtlesse
Ayenst the law of Rome expresse,
And all with Antichrist they holden,
As men may in the booke beholden.
"And than commaunden they to sleen,
All tho that with Peter been,
But they shall never have that might,
And God toforne, for strife to fight,
That they ne shall ynough find,
That Peters law shall have in mind,
And ever hold, and so mainteen,
That at the last it shall be seen,
That they shall all come thereto,
For ought that they can speake or do.
"And thilke lawe shall not stond,
That they by John have understond,
But maugre hem it shall adoun,
And been brought to confusioun,
"But I woll stint of this matere,
For it is wonder long to here,
But had that ilke booke endured,

Of better estate I were ensured,
And friendes have I yet pardee,
That han me set in great degree.

Of all this world is emperour
Guile my father, the trechour,
And empresse my mother is,
Maugre the Holy Ghost ywis,
Our mightie linage and our rout
Reigneth in every reigne about,
And well is worthy we ministers be,
For all this worlde governe we,
And can the folke so well deceive,
That none our guile can perceive,
And though they doen, they dare not say,
The sooth dare no wight bewray.
" But he in Christes wrath him leadeth,
That more than Christ my brethren dredeth,
He n'is no full good champion,
That dredeth such similation,
Nor that for paine woll refusen,
Us to correct and accusen.
" He woll not entremete by right,
Ne have God in his eyesight,
And therefore God shall him punice;
But me ne recketh of no vice,
Sithen men us loven communably,
And holden us for so worthy,
That we may folke repreve echone,
And we n'ill have reprefe of none:
Whom shoulden folke worshippen so,
But us that stinten never mo
To patren while that folke may us see,
Though it not so behind hem be.

And where is more wood follie,
Than to enhaunce chivalrie,
And love noble men and gay,
That jolly clothes wearen alway?
If they be such folke as they seemen,
So cleane, as men hir clothes demen,
And that hir wordes follow hir dede,
It is great pitie out of drede,
For they woll be none hypocritis,
Of hem me thinketh greate spight is,
I cannot love hem on no side.
"But beggers with these hoodes wide,
With sleigh and pale faces leane,
And graie clothes nat full cleane,
But fretted full of tatarwagges,
And high shoes knopped with dagges,
That frouncen like a quaile pipe,
Or bootes riveling as a gipe.
"To such folke as I you devise,
Should princes and these lordes wise,
Take all hir landes and hir things,
Both warre and peace in governings,
To such folke should a prince him yeve,
That would his life in honour live.
"And if they be nat as they seme,
They serven thus the world to queme,
There would I dwell to deceive
The folke, for they shall nat perceive.
"But I ne speake in no such wise,
That men should humble habite dispise,
So that no pride there under be,
No man should hate, as thinketh me,
The poore man in such clothing,
But God ne preiseth him nothing,

That saith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glory him take,
And woll of such delices use,
Who may that begger well excuse?
"That papelarde, that him yeeldeth so,
And woll to worldly ease go,
And saith that he the world hath left,
And greedily it gripeth eft,
He is the hound, shame is to saine,
That to his casting goeth againe.

But unto you dare I not lie,
But might I feelen or espie,
That ye perceived it nothing,
Ye should have a starke leasing:
Right in your hond thus to beginne,
I nolde it let for no sinne."
The god lough at the wonder tho,
And every wight gan lough also,
And saied: "Lo here a man right,
For to be trustie to every wight."

"False Semblaunt," (quod Love) "say to mee,
Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of ribaudes shalt be my king,
Wolt thou well holden my forwardes?"
"Yea, sir, from hence forwardes,
Had never your father here beforne,
Servaunt so true, sith he was borne,
That is ayenst all nature.
"Sir, put you in that aventure,
For though ye borowes take of me,
The sikerer shall ye never be

For hostages, ne sikernesse,
Or chartres, for to beare witnesse:
I take your selfe to record here,
That men ne may in no manere
Tearen the wolfe out of his hide,
Till he be slaine backe and side,
Though men him beat and all defile,
What wene ye that I woll beguile?
" For I am clothed meekely,
There under is all my treachery,
Mine herte chaungeth never the mo
For none habite, in which I go;
Though I have chere of simplenesse,
I am not wearie of shreudnesse;
My lemman, strained Abstinaunce,
Hath mister of my purveiaunce,
She had full long ago be dede,
Nere my counsaile and my rede;
Let her alone, and you and mee."
And Love answered, " I trust thee
Without borow, for I woll none."
And False Semblant the theefe anone,
Right in that ilke same place,
That had of treason all his face,
Right blacke within, and white without,
Thanking him, gan on his knees lout.
Than was there nought, but every man
Now to assaute, that sailen can
(Quod Love) and that full hardely:
Than armed they hem comenly
Of such armour as to hem fell.
Whan they were armed fiers and fell,
They went hem forth all in a rout,
And set the castle all about;

That sayth him harme, if he wote it,
All be he never so poore of wit;
And sooth is also sikerly,
This know ye, sir, as well as I,
That lovers gladly woll visiten
The places there hir loves habiten:
This man you loveth and eke honoureth,
This man to serve you laboureth,
And clepeth you his freind so deere,
And this man maketh you good cheere,
And everie man that you meeteth,
He you saleweth, and he you greeteth;
He preseth not so oft, that ye
Ought of his comming encombred be:
There presen other folke on you,
Full ofter than he doth now,
And if his herte him strained so
Unto the rose for to go,
Ye should him seene so ofte need,
That ye should take him with the deed;
He coud his comming not forbeare,
Though ye him thrilled with a speare;
It n'ere not than as it is now,
But trusteth well, I sweare it you,
That it is clene out of his thought.
Sir, certes he ne thinketh it nought,
No more ne doth Faire Welcomming,
That sore abieth all this thing:
And if they were of one assent,
Full soone were the rose hent,
The maugre yours would be.
"And sir, of o thing hearkeneth me,
Sith ye this man, that loveth you,
Han sayd such harme and shame, now

To whom she had ofter went,
Than any frere of his covent.
And he visited her also,
And many a sermon saied her to,
He n'olde let for man on live,
That he ne would her oft shrive,
And with so great devotion
They made her confession,
That they had oft for the nones
Two heades in one hood at ones.
Of faire shape I devised her thee,
But pale of face sometime was shee,
That false tratouresse untrew,
Was like that sallow horse of hew,
That in the Apocalips is shewed,
That signifieth tho folke beshrewed,
That been all full of trecherie,
And pale, through hypocrisie,
For on that horse no colour is,
But onely dead and pale ywis,
Of such a colour enlangoured,
Was Abstinence ywis coloured,
Of her estate she her repented,
As her visage represented.
She had a burdoune all of theft,
That Guile had yeve her of his yeft,
And a scrippe of faint distresse,
That full was of elengenesse,
And forth she walked soberlie:
And False Semblant saynt, je vous die,
And as it were for such mistere,
Doen on the cope of a frere,
With cheare simple, and full pitous,
His looking was not disdeinous,

Ne proud, but meeke and full pesible.
About his necke he bare a Bible,
And squierly forth gan he gon,
And for to rest his limmes upon,
He had of treason a portent,
As he were feeble, his way he went.
But in his sleve he gan to thring
A rasour sharpe, and well biting,
That was forged in a forge,
Which that men clepen coupe gorge.
So long forth hir way they nomen,
Till they to Wicked Tongue comen,
That at his gate was sitting,
And saw folke in the way passing.
The pilgrimes saw he fast by,
That beiren hem full meekely,
And humbly they with hem mette,
Dame Abstinence first him grette,
And sith him False Semblant salued,
And he hem, but he not remued,
For he ne drede him not adele:
For when he saw hir faces wele,
Alway in herte him thought so,
He should know hem both two,
For well he knew dame Abstinaunce,
But he ne knew not Constrainaunce,
He knew nat that she was constrained,
Ne of her theeves life fained,
But wende she come of will all free,
But she come in another degree,
And if of good will she began,
That will was failed her than.

And False Semblant had he seene alse,

But he knew nat that he was false,
Yet false was he, but his falsenesse
Ne coud he not espie, nor gesse,
For Semblant was so slie wrought,
That falsenesse he ne espyed nought:
But haddest thou knowen him beforne,
Thou wouldest on a booke have sworne,
Whan thou him saw in thilke arraie
That he, that whilome was so gaie,
And of the daunce Jolly Robin
Was tho become a Jacobin:
But soothly what so men him call
Frere preachours been good men all,
Hir order wickedly they bearen
Such ministreles if they weren.
So been Augustins, and Cordileres,
And Carmes, and eke sacked freres,
And all-freres shode and bare,
Though some of hem ben great and square,
Full holy men, as I hem deem,
Everich of hem would good man seem:
But shalt thou never of apparence
Seene conclude good consequence
In none argument ywis,
If existence all failed is:
For men may finde alway sopheme
The consequence to enveneme,
Who so that hath had the subtiltee
The double sentence for to see.
Whan the pilgrimes commen were
To Wicked Tongue that dwelleth there,
Hir harneis nigh hem was algate,
By Wicked tongue adoune they sate,
That bad hem nere him for to come,

And of tidinges tell him some,
And sayd hem: "What case maketh you
To come into this place now?"

"Sir," sayed strained Abstinance,
"We for to drie our penance,
With hertes pitous and devout,
Are commen, as pilgrimes gone about,
Well nigh on foote alway we go
Full doughty been our hoeles two,
And thus both we ben sent
Throughout the world that is miswent,
To yeve ensample, and preach also,
To fishen sinfull men we go,
For other fishing, ne fish we,
And, sir, for that charite,
As we be wont, herbrow we crave,
Your life to amende Christ it save,
And so it should you not displease,
We woulden, if it were your ease,
A short sermon unto you sain.
And Wicked Tongue answered again,
"The house" (quod he) "such (as ye see)
Shall not be warned you for me,
Saie what you list, and I woll heare."
"Graunt mercie sweet sir deare,"
(Quod alderfirst) "dame Abstinence,"
And thus began she her sentence.
"Sir, the first vertue certaine,
The greatest, and most soveraigne
That may be found in any man,
For having, or for wit he can,
That is his tongue to refraine,
Thereto ought everie wight him paine:

For it is better still be,
Than for to speaken harme parde,
And he that hearkeneth it gladly,
He is no good man sikerly.
" And sir, aboven all other sin,
In that art thou most guiltie in:
Thou speake a jape, not long ago.
" And sir, that was right evill do
Of a young man, that here repaired,
And never yet this place apaired:
Thou saidest he awaited nothing,
But to deceive Faire Welcoming:
Ye sayd nothing sooth of that,
But sir, ye lye, I tell ye plat,
He ne cometh no more, ne goeth parde,
I trow ye shall him never see;
Faire Welcoming in prison is,
That oft hath played with you er this,
The fairest games that he coude,
Without filth, still or loude.
Now dare she not her selfe solace,
Ye han also the man doe chase,
That he dare neither come ne go,
What mooveth you to hate him so?
But properly your wicked thought,
That many a false lesing hath thought,
That mooveth your foule eloquence,
That jangleth ever in audience,
And on the folke ariseth blame,
And doth hem dishonour and shame,
For thing that may have no preving,
But likelinesse, and contriving.
" For I dare saine, that Reason deemeth,
It is not all sooth thing that seemeth,

And it is sinne to controve
Thing that is to reprove;
This wote ye wele, and sir, therefore
Ye arn to blame the more,
And nathelesse, he recketh lite
He yeveth not now thereof a mite,
For if he thought harme, parfay,
He would come and gone all day,
He cond himselfe not absteine,
Now cometh he not, and that is sene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But if it be through aventure,
And lasse than other folke algate,
And thou here watchest at the gate,
With speare in thine arest alwaie,
There muse musard all the daie,
Thou wakest night and day for thought,
Ywis thy travaile is for nought,
And Jelousie withouten faile,
Shall never quit thee thy travaile,
And skathe is, that Faire Welcoming,
Without any trespassing,
Shall wrongfully in prison be,
There weepeth and languisheth he,
And though thou never yet ywis,
Agiltest man no more but this,
Take not a greefe it were worthy
To put thee out of this baily,
And afterward in prison lie,
And fettred thee till that thou die;
For thou shalt for this sinne dwell
Right in the Divels arse of Hell,
But if that thou repent thee:
Ma fay, thou lyest falsely." (Quod he)

"What, welcome with mischaunce now,
Have I therefore herboured you
To say me shame, and eke reprove,
With sorrie happe to your behove,
Am I to day your herbegere
Go herber you elsewhere than here,
That han a lyer called me,
Two tregetours art thou and he,
That in mine house doe me this shame,
And for my sooth saw ye me blame.
Is this the sermon that ye make?
To all the divels I me take,
Or else God thou me confound,
But er men didden this castle found,
It passed not ten dayes of twelve,
But it was told right to my selve,
And as they sayd, right so told I,
He kist the rose privily:
Thus sayd I now, and have sayd yore,
I n'ot where he did any more.
Why should men say me such a thing,
If it had been gabbing?
Right so saide I, and woll say yet,
I trow I lyed not of it,
And with my bemes I woll blow
To all neighbours a row,
How he hath both commen and gone."
Tho spake False Semblant right anone,
"All is not gospell out of dout,
That men saine in the towne about,
Lay no deafe eare to my speaking,
I swere you, sir, it is gabbing,
I trow you wote well certainly,
That no man loveth him tenderly,

That sayth him harme, if he wote it,
All be he never so poore of wit;
And sooth is also sikerly,
This know ye, sir, as well as I,
That lovers gladly woll visiten
The places there hir loves habiten:
This man you loveth and eke honoureth,
This man to serve you laboureth,
And clepeth you his freind so deere,
And this man maketh you good cheere,
And everie man that you meeteth,
He you saleweth, and he you greeteth;
He preseth not so oft, that ye
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That it is clene out of his thought.
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No more ne doth Faire Welcomming,
That sore abieth all this thing:
And if they were of one assent,
Full soone were the rose hent,
The maugre yours would be.
"And sir, of o thing hearkeneth me,
Sith ye this man, that loveth you,
Han sayd such harme and shame, now

Witteth well, if he gessed it,
Ye may well demen in your wit,
He n'olde nothing love you so,
Ne callen you his friend also,
But night and daie he woll wake,
The castle to destroy and take,
If it were sooth, as ye devise;
Or some man in some manner wise
Might it warne him everidele,
Or by himselfe perceive wele,
For sith he might not come and gone
As he was whilom wont to done,
He might it soone wite and see,
But now all otherwise wote hee.
"Than have ye, sir, all utterly
Deserved Hell, and jollyly
The death of Hell doubtlesse,
That thrallen folke so guiltlesse."
False Semblant so prooveth this thing,
That he can none answering,
And seeth alwaie such apparaunce,
That nigh he fell in repentaunce,
And sayd him, "Sir, it may well be.
Semblant, a good man seemen ye,
And Abstinence, full wise ye seeme,
Of o talent you both I deeme,
What counsaile woll ye to me yeven?"
"Right here anon thou shalt be shriven
And say thy sinne without more,
Of this shalt thou repent sore,
For I am priest, and have poste,
To shrive folke of most dignite
That ben as wide as world may dure,
Of all this world I have the cure,

And that had never yet persoun,
Ne vicarie of no manner toun.
"And God wote I have of thee,
A thousand times more pitee,
Than hath thy priest parochiall
Though he thy friend be speciall.
"I have avauntage, in o wise,
That your priests be not so wise
Ne halfe so lettred (as am I)
I am licensed boldly,
In divinitie for to read,
And to confessen out of dread.
"If ye woll you now confesse,
And leave your sinnes more and lesse,
Without abode, kneele doune anon,
And you shall have absolution."

END OF VOL. I.

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